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HELL MALBREHEY.

BY ALICE CARY.

Oh, cruel Hell Malbrehey!
She will break my heart, I say,
For her mouth is like a rose,
And she knows such a way!

She says she's not deceiving,
But she says it with a way
That I know there's no believing
She will love me for a day.

And all her fond caresses
Seem but softer light and gay,
For she smiles and shakes her tresses
From her forehead, such a way!

When I say and she knows,
That I love her, and that I'm gay,
For she knows her saying pleases,
When she says it such a way!

I ask her more in sorrow
Than in hope, to name the day;
And she always says, "to-morrow,"
But she says it, such a way!

I call my Hell, "Deceiver,"
For she sighs and whispers, "nay,"
And she knows that I believe her
When she answers in a way!

ALARIC;

OR,

THE TYRANT'S VAULT.

A SICILIAN STORY OF EARLY TIMES.

BY STEPHEN COBB, JR.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN A STRANGE LAND; AND A STRANGE FATE.

When consciousness returned Alaric found himself upon a soft couch, and as he attempted to move his head there was a sharp pain in his palace. For a while he had only a shadowy perception of his present position—of pain, and of wandering in mind arose from the chaotic gloom, and he finally remembered where he had been. At first, in his disturbed imagination, it seemed as though he were at sea, and in his way from Carthage to Sicily. But he remembered that he had made that passage, and that he had reached his destination in safety. He had entered the city of Syracuse, and the tyrant king had stood upon him. Was he now in the royal dungeon? No. He had escaped thence, and found refuge in the Temple of Diana. Was he upon some soft bed prepared by the priests of the Mystic Tie, and undergoing yet the ordeal of his maltreatment? No. He had passed all that, and had left the temple by a secret way, and returned with the old herald to his cave. Now his thoughts became more clear. He remembered the mission of the messenger from the temple; the departure of Archbosus; his loneliness upon the mountain; his discount thereof; his coming upon the seashore; his meeting with the king's soldiers, and his battle with them. And here the cloud settled down upon his memory. He knew that he had slain his antagonists, and that he himself had been wounded; and he had a faint recollection of struggling towards the mountains after his work had been done; but whether he had reached the cave, or whether he had fallen by the way, he could not tell.

Again the youth tried to move, and again he perceived that he was bound. He was now able to take some note of things about him, and his first reasoning sent after his recollection was that Lusta was, that he was swayed to and fro with a constant, unequal motion. At first he had thought that this might be the effect of some hallucination, consequent upon the injuries he had received; but he now concluded that he was upon the sea; and as his observations extended he had assurance upon this point. He was in a narrow, low apartment, which was excessively filthy and dirty, and the light to which came through an open scuttle overhead, from which descended a rough ladder. It was a compartment of the hold of a ship. The motion was now painfully palpable to him, and he could hear the water as it dashed against the ship's side. He closed his eyes, and then recalled the circumstances which had led him past ground through which he seemed to have passed in such a troubled dream, after all. It was too strange, too fraught with momentous events, too full of marvelous adventure, to meet his reason as being all real. He could not and will it from him. He assured himself that he was now awake, and all the rest followed as a matter of course.

As soon as his mind was clear upon this point he turned his attention to his present situation. He could discover that he was upon a low pallet or couch, upon which were soft cushions, and that he was bound to it by broad bands of cloth passing over his legs and breast. He felt the pain of the wound under his arm, and he could feel that it had been thickly swathed. There was a dull, sinking sensation about the heart, and a sense of pain in his head and left shoulder, and in the left breast. At length he called for help—he called loudly—and the effort not only cost him much labor but it sent a throbbing pain through his system, and produced feverish heat all over the body. In a little while a man came down the ladder. He was a coarse, rough-looking fellow, clad in a seaman's garb, and wore a short sword suspended by the wide belt that confined his dirty tunic.

"Have you come to your senses?" he asked, as he approached the cot upon which our hero lay.

"Yes," replied Alaric. "And where am I?"

"Can't you guess where you are?"

"I think I am on the sea."

"You've guessed right there, my master. You are on the sea, and in good hands."

"But how came I here? Whither am I going?"

"You came hither because we brought you," replied the man, sitting down upon the floor as he spoke. "We were upon the coast, near Syracuse, and as we sailed along we found the dead bodies of your companions. We overheard them said we were attacked that there was no life in them, and while we were wondering how they had been slain, one of my men discovered you, my master. You were close by the trees, spread out flat on your face, and at first we thought you, too, were dead; but we saw that blood was trickling from a wound under your left arm, and upon feeling we found that there was warmth about the heart. Some of my fellows proposed that we should leave you, but I thought a live man was better than a dead one, and I had you carried to my boat. Some soldiers gave us chase just as we reached the water's edge, but we escaped them, and got you safely on board the ship. And here you are, not so sound as you might be, but safe from dying on the hot sand."

"You have not told me whither you are carrying me," said Alaric, after a pause of some moments.

"Why—we shall have to carry you wherever we go, I suppose," replied the seaman, evasively.

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"I cannot escape," he murmured; "why have you bound me?"

"Why—alone your soul, how else should we have kept you in your place? You'd roll off every minute if you were left free to go with the motion of the ship. But you feel worse. Does the landing pain you?"

"I am faint—my head swims," replied Alaric, striving to recover himself.

"That's the result of the labor you've been at to find out when you were. But we'll do the best we can for you. Some of us are used to take care of wounds."

Thus speaking the man went to the foot of the ladder and called to some one on deck, and shortly a second one of the crew came down. He was clad the same as his companion, and was also armed. The thought flitted through the youth's mind that he was on board one of the piratical vessels of the Carthaginians, of which he had heard so much; but he had become too faint to make further inquiries. He knew that the bandage was taken from his body, and that the edges of the wound were loosened, and that he was raised higher up; and he could hear the men who were busy over it to the wound; but gradually their conversation sounded strangely in his ear—things swam in his vision—his head reeled—and he sank again into insensibility. And now followed long days of pain and anguish—of alternate light and darkness—of essence of rest and of unrest. Rough men nursed him, and lifted him about—fed him, and the tempest howled in his ears, and the huge seas beat over and drenched him. There were moments of lucid thought—then followed strange fantasies not paroxysms. The blood leaped wildly and hotly through his veins like a wasted, and then followed faintness and cold, as though the essence of his system were all frozen up. A while he was upon the sea—the wind, and the tempest, and the drenching rain were there—and then he was borne upon the land. Strange voices sounded in his ear, and strange visions filled before him.

And so passed the days—for how long he could not tell—until reason once more dawned upon him. He awoke, as from a long and terrible dream, and found himself upon a low bed, within a small apartment, with an open window close by his side. The sweet perfume from a thousand flowers and fragrant shrubs was wafted in upon him, and the atmosphere was warm and soft. He looked himself upon his elbow, and gazed out from the window. He could see a broad garden, stretching away to the foot of a gentle hill, filled with vines, and fruit-trees, and flowering shrubs. There were arbors and fountains, and he saw people in the distance, walking. He overheard them said we were saluted that there was no life in them, and while we were wondering how they had been slain, one of my men discovered you, my master. You were close by the trees, spread out flat on your face, and at first we thought you, too, were dead; but we saw that blood was trickling from a wound under your left arm, and upon feeling we found that there was warmth about the heart. Some of my fellows proposed that we should leave you, but I thought a live man was better than a dead one, and I had you carried to my boat. Some soldiers gave us chase just as we reached the water's edge, but we escaped them, and got you safely on board the ship. And here you are, not so sound as you might be, but safe from dying on the hot sand."

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might do it, but remember, I have pity on myself as well. I have a care for my own heart, and cannot see it crushed. It has been decided as I have said, and thou art to be my queen."

"Oh! sire!—in mercy say not so!"

"I have said it, and the word is gone forth."

"No, no—it cannot—it shall not be! I can never be your queen!"

"Thou dost but waste words, Ianthe. I have spoken it, and no power can swerve me from my course."

"My father! O, my father! Let me see him!"

"Do you still speak of Bellerus?"

"Aye—of him to whom thou saidst I should return."

"Then know that Bellerus is dead!"

"Dead!" shrieked the maiden, starting to her feet. "He is not dead! O—tell me not that!"

"I tell thee he is dead!"

"And thou didst murder him!" Ianthe cried, starting back as though from a poisonous serpent.

"Not so, fair one. I would have saved him if it had lain in my power. My soldiers were sent out in search of the bold youth Alaric, whom I wished much to question. They met him near one of the gates, and Bellerus was with him. The two were commanded to stop, but they refused. Thereupon the soldiers declared their authority, announcing that they acted in the name of the king, and they supposed that the twain would immediately surrender, but they did not so. Both Alaric and Bellerus made opposition, thereby throwing the royal guard back upon their own defense, and in the end they were slain."

"Alaric and Bellerus were slain?"

"Yes—both."

"Both! both!" gasped the stricken girl, shrinking back and covering her face. "O, no!" she added, in a spasmodic tone, starting again to her feet, and stretching forth her hands imploringly to the king, "it cannot be! They are not dead! There is no need that you should deceive me. You have power enough without that. Say that they are not dead!—O! say that they are not!"

"I could not say so and tell the truth, for they are both in the land of shadows. So thou hast no other home but this, and here thou hadst better make thyself contented."

"Contented!" cried Ianthe, supported for the moment by the contempt she felt for the tyrant before her. "Be contented here—in this palace—and with the thought ever present which thou wouldst force upon me! O! thou canst know little of a true heart. If they are dead, their blood is upon thee!"

"Nay, fair lady, thou shouldst not so defame him who is to be thy lord and husband."

"Thou—my husband! O! may death come and claim me, too, ere that consummation is done! I tell thee, king, I will not be thine!"

"Now, sweet one," resumed the monarch, with a devilish look, "thou dost put me upon my authority, and I tell thee plainly thou shalt be what I have promised. And mark you—the time shall not be long. Ere another week has passed, Ianthe shall be my queen! I swear it, by all the gods of Heaven and of earth, and the power exists not that can thwart me in my purpose! Now, maiden, thou canst reflect upon it at thy leisure. I simply give thee the fate that is thine—marked out for thee plainly—and from which thou canst not escape, and thou mayest ponder upon it as thou wilt. Only let me say this: Thy peace and comfort in time to come may depend much upon the disposition which is manifested now. I trust you understand me. Yet, Ianthe, I will be kind to thee, *if thou wilt show thyself deserving of my kindness. I wish so to be, if thou wilt only permit it.* So do not misunderstand me. The case stands simply thus: Thou MUST BE MY QUEEN! So far it is fixed as firmly as any decree of Jupiter. But beyond that it rests much with thee. *I need say no more.*"

"Thou givest me a fatal favor!" the maiden said, sinking down, and pressing her folded hands upon her bosom. "I ask for life as the only boon worth having, and thou kindly offerest me the choice of means by which I must die. I say to thee now, king, if thou makest me thy wife, thou shalt wed but a lump of clay! So I care not for the joys or sorrows beyond it."

"Thou wilt think better of this when thou art more cool, so I will leave thee to thine own reflections."

With this the king turned and left the apartment, and when Ianthe was alone she leaped to her feet, and raised her hands above her head.

"Never! never!" she solemnly exclaimed. "If my father and Alaric be dead, I will join them ere I will be that man's queen! If I should let my life forth myself, some kind hand would give me sepulture. But he lies to me. If they be dead, he killed them. O—so meant his strange words when he said he would lead me to Bellerus's arms! And my father foresaw it all. When last he spoke to me, in this room, the thought of death was upon him, and 'twas that made him so sad. O! it is all plain now. Did not the tyrant seek Alaric's life in the most cruel manner? Aye—he has murdered them! And shall I be his wife? Shall I place my hand within the one all red with my father's blood! The gods defend me!"

As she ceased speaking, she sank back upon the couch, and rested her brow upon her hands. Her thoughts were wild and confused, and a sense of pain was upon her heart. And even when she could control her thoughts the pain was not lessened. She believed that both her father and Alaric were dead, and she had two good reasons for such belief besides the avowal of the king. First: She knew that, from circumstances which had transpired, Pyrrho must desire to have them removed. And second: She knew that the tyrant never hesitated at any work of blood, if it pleased him to have it done.

And if they were gone, she was indeed without a home! Where were her friends? Upon whom could she call? Alas! there were none! It was with this thought of utter loneliness and helplessness upon her that she allowed her head to sink upon the cushion of her couch, and her groans of despair to break forth. She lay there while the darkness crept over the palace and over the city—she lay there while the eunuch came in with her food, and noticed him not. He left a lamp burning upon the side-board, and went away without disturbing her. It was an hour after this, and she was upon the point of arising to close the casement, for the chill night air was coming in upon her, when she thought she heard her door softly opened. She looked around, and beheld a man of most strange appearance—it was a presence that filled her with both fear and awe.

He was aged, and his hair, of snowy whiteness, hung low upon his shoulders, while his beard, of the same snowy hue, floated far down upon his bosom. His form, which appeared large and of good proportions, was enveloped in a cloak, or mantle, of black, which was secured about the loins by a broad belt of gold. This mantle was wrought with strange characters, upon the breast and upon the hem; and like characters were engraved upon the golden belt. Upon his head he wore a hat such as the maiden had never before seen, its color being black like his robe, and its shape tall and pointed, like a cone. He advanced towards her with a slow step, and put forth his hand, as though he would have her keep silence. She could now see his eyes and his brow, and she thought he had a kind look.

"Let not my presence alarm thee, my child," he spoke, in a low, gentle tone, "for I come to thee upon a message of mercy."

How strange! Had not she seen this man before? Had not that voice sounded upon her ear at some former time? Or was it only a freak of her imagination? But she felt confidence in him at once. Perhaps it was natural that, in her then desolate situation, she should instinctively cling to the first opportunity of hope that presented itself; but the human heart is not apt to reach forth after an unworthy object upon a natural impulse. Those impressions which first strike the mind are most sure to be true ones. So Ianthe felt a strong impression that this man would be trustful and faithful. She thought she saw it in his eye, and heard it in the tone of his voice.

"Has the king seen thee of late?" the visitor asked, as soon as he saw that he had secured the maiden's attention.

"Yes, father. He was here but a short time since."

"Had he any purpose in coming?"

Ianthe hesitated.

"I ask for thine own good, my child."

"O, sir!" the poor girl cried, putting forth her folded hands, "I cannot doubt thee; and yet I would know thy mission,—why thou hast come, and who thou art."

"Ianthe, I have come to serve thee; and if thou wilt trust in me thou shalt have help. Thou askest who I am. Hast ever heard the name—AGRIPPA?"

"AGRIPPA," repeated the maiden, at first thoughtfully, and then starting with sudden emotion as the idea she sought came to her mind. "Art thou the one of whom we have heard?"

"What hast thou heard?"

"We have heard of an Agrippa who is a priest of Diana at Abydos, and who has wondrous powers, far exceeding the powers of men, and little inferior to the gods."

"And have ye ever heard that Agrippa of Abydos was expected here?"

"Yes, father—I have so heard."

"Then wonder not when I tell thee that I am the priest of Diana, and that I am called, Agrippa. I have wondrous powers, as many shall see. I must have exercised them now, or I should not have been here. But be not overawed, nor shrink from me, for, as true as the temple stands, I will help thee. Now tell me the king's purpose."

"He purposes to make me his wife," replied the maiden. She spoke freely, for, with all the awe she naturally felt in the presence of one whose fame was so wondrous, she experienced a degree of confidence which gave her support.

"I thought as much," said Agrippa, taking a seat by the girl's side. "And now," he added, "I wish to know if you have been able to judge why he pursues this course?"

Ianthe thought a few moments, and then answered:

"I cannot judge with any clearness, for he has not been explicit."

"What I wish to arrive at is this: Has he seemed to fear you? Has he shown any sign whereby you would be led to infer that your appearance had surprised him?"

"Aye, most surely have I," replied the maiden, quickly. "*On the night when he first beheld my face he appeared like one affrighted; and his minister, whom he called, Donatus, was affected in* like manner. And he has gazed upon me most strangely since. He declares that Fate has determined that I should be his queen."

"*Now I understand it,*" returned the priest, with a slight nodding of the head. "But be under no apprehensions. He shall not succeed."

"And can you help me?"

"I can—and will."

"You will take me from this place?"

"Not now. Thou wilt be more safe here for the present. Thou wilt be safest here until Pyrrho seeks to consummate his plan; but that plan shall never be carried out, rest assured."

"Father," said Ianthe, laying her hand upon his arm with a trembling touch, "dost thou know one Bellerus, a mason?"

"I do."

"Dost know where he is now?"

"Why do you ask?"

"The king says he is dead."

The priest did not answer at once. He bowed his head, and for a little while he seemed to be thinking. Then he raised his eyes to the maiden's face, and taking the hand which had rested upon his arm, he said:

"I cannot tell thee where he is. I think the king meant him mortal harm; and I know he has been within the royal power. But pass as lightly over that thought as thou canst."

"Alas! then, he is dead!" And the stricken girl would have fallen to weeping, had not Agrippa quietly added:

"Let thy thoughts rest upon what thou hast gained, and not upon that which thou hast lost. Think of the love which still surrounds thee, and not of the evil. Raise thine eyes to heaven, where Hope beams yet brightly, and not sink them downward, where Despair clanks its festering chains. I tell thee, Ianthe, these are wondrous times, and thou hast an important part to play. Be hopeful of good; be pledged to duty; and trust to Heaven for the future!"

Again the maiden was startled by the strange impression that she conversed with one whom she had before known. A dim echo from the priest's tones lingered among the shadowy recollections of by-gone times; and the light that gleamed from his eyes penetrated to her soul as some other eye-light had done. But these impressions did not prevent her from feeling the force of his words; and so deeply did she feel it, that the current of her heart was stopped, and her hope struggled to rise. But she had another question to ask, and her heart was hushed while she waited for the answer.

"You have heard, perhaps, of a youth, named Alaric."

"I have, my child."

"The king—says he, too, is dead."

"Then the king has lied to thee."

"Ha! and does Alaric still live? Is he alive and well? O! tell me!"

"I will tell thee truly, Ianthe. He fled from the city—he gained the country—I know not where he is now, but we hope he is safe."

"It is enough!" ejaculated the fair girl, clasping her hands in gratitude. "If he is safe, I have yet some hope of joy in the future!"

"And with this hope to comfort thee, and the assurance of safety I have given thee to release thee from fear of the king, I must leave thee; for I have business elsewhere."

"But," cried Ianthe, starting up as the priest arose, "I shall not remain here long?"

"Not many days," replied Agrippa. "But," he added, impressively, "have faith in what I have told thee, and be assured that thou wilt remain here only so long as thine own good and safety are subserved thereby. Let come what will, know that thou hast friends who not only have the will, but the power, to serve thee. I may see thee again, ere long."

With this the priest turned away, and was soon gone. Ianthe had not the power to ask him more, for she was stricken with awe and wonder. As the first startling thrill of rising hope settled to a more calm spirit in her bosom she could reflect upon the strange circumstances connected with this visit. She sat down and tried to think where and when she had seen the man before; but she struggled with her memory in vain. She could dwell upon the palpable impression, as one does upon a by-gone dream, but she could do more. But she would trust him, nevertheless; and, with all the confidence of her soul, she hung upon the promise he had given her.

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING AND THE ORACLE.

The news was not long in spreading through the city that AGRIPPA, the famed Priest of Diana, of Abydos, was within the walls. His name had long been known and revered, and the people had expected his coming with much anxiety, for it was said that he spoke with the tongues of the gods, and could read all coming things. By and by it was reported that the great Agrippa was in the temple, and thither large numbers of the people flocked; and when they saw him, they were filled with awe. His long flowing beard, of silvery whiteness, had a superhuman appearance of itself; and then the strange characters upon his sable robe, and the gleaming of his broad, precious belt; and his deportment of wisdom and authority, all conspired to raise the superstitious wonder of the people to the highest pitch. Many of them pressed forward and consulted him, and he gave them answers which more than surprised them—answers which confirmed them in the faith they had already entertained of his powers.

There was one in Syracuse who heard of Agrippa's coming with more than ordinary emotion. Pyrrho, the king, received the news, and was much moved thereby. There was much of the future which he would know, and he determined to consult this priest, who, it was said, could read the heavens, and translate all the language of the gods. So he called Claudian, his captain, to him, and bade him go and conduct the wonderful man to the palace. In an hour the captain returned, but Agrippa came not with him.

"Where is the priest?" demanded Pyrrho, when he saw that his messenger had returned alone.

"Sire," replied the captain, "he seemed to deem it an indignity that thou should'st have sent for him."

"What—will he not come?"

"He says if you would see him, you must come to the temple."

"By Jove, but he is bold and insolent."

"Ah, sire, he hath a wonderful power."

"How? Hast heard any of his sayings, Claudian?"

"Yes. I heard him speak with several; and he read to them the past of their lives as though from a written book. He knows all things."

"And he can read the future."

"Yes, sire. He reads it as one who speaks from sure knowledge."

"Why will he not come hither?"

"He asked me where the king gave audience. I told him in the palace. Then he bade me tell *my master that the Priest of Diana gave audience in Diana's Temple.*"

"Well—there's reason in it; and I shall seek him. Prepare my retinue, Claudian, and let me know when it is ready."

The captain withdrew, and ere long returned and reported that all was ready. Pyrrho descended to the court of the palace, and having mounted the horse which had been caparisoned for him, he set forth. When he reached the square of the temple, the heralds went forward and prepared a way for him. At the gate he dismounted, and the people fell back as he approached. He found the priest at the altar, and at once addressed him:

"Art thou Agrippa, the priest of Diana of Abydos?"

"I am. And thou art Pyrrho, the king."

"Yes. I have come to consult thee, and I would crave a private audience."

"Such I give to all who ask it," replied Agrippa, stepping down from the marble platform upon which he had stood. "Thou mayest follow me."

The priest led the way to a small apartment in the rear of the temple, to which the light was admitted only through numerous spheres of amethyst. The walls were of a somber hue, and the deeply tinted light, possessing, as it did, all the depth of a shadowy eve, gave a solemn tinge to the scene. The king was evidently moved with awe, for a tremor was perceptible in his frame, and a look of reverence crept across his hardened features as he regarded the venerable astrologer and priest.

"We are now alone," spoke Agrippa, resting his hand upon a pedestal, on the top of which was a small statue of Diana. "Speak to me freely, and thou shalt know all that the gods are willing should be communicated."

"First," said the king, in a tremulous tone, for he could not yet feel perfect power over himself, "I would ask if there be any imminent danger near me."

"Thou shouldst not need to ask that question of me," Agrippa replied, almost sternly. "Danger always surrounds a throne, and it is rendered imminent or distant by the acts of the monarch."

"I know there is danger about me," said the king.

"So do I," added the priest.

"And I think it is imminent," pursued the former.

"I know it is," responded the latter.

"Ha—thou knowest?"

"Yes."

"And knowest thou its character?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

"The same as that which has threatened many a usurper before thee."

"How!" cried the king, in anger. "Dost dare to speak thus to me?"

"I must speak truth while I speak; and if thou wouldst hear aught else, thou shouldst have sought some other place than this."

"But there may be words offensive to my ears."

"Not half so offensive as is the thought of the danger thou wouldst avoid," remarked the priest, in a meaning tone.

The king started, and gazed sharply into the old man's face.

"Wert thou ever in Syracuse before?" he asked.

"Yes."

"When?"

"When thou wert a child, and since thou wert a man. But I allowed thee this interview not to answer for myself, but for thee. If thou wouldst know of the things that concern thee, ask."

Again the monarch cast his eyes searchingly upon the priest, and gazed as gazes one who seeks to solve some deep problem; but finally he gave up the thought, and came back to the subject from which he had wandered in anger.

"I ask thee again—what is the danger which threatens me?"

"A head without a body—a body without a head."

"Death, you mean!" whispered Pyrrho.

"Yes."

"And whence comes this danger?"

"From those who have cause to fear you."

"By the heavenly crown, old man, they can be numbered by thousands."

"And thy hope must be in those who love thee!" added Agrippa.

"Ah—men in authority are not apt to be greatly loved," returned Pyrrho, uneasily. "But a truce to this vague language. Thou knowest the danger, and thou knowest whence it cometh?"

"Aye."

"Then tell me where I may look for it."

"It could not benefit thee to know, king, save that it cometh, as thou hast already spoken, from thousands. I can only tell thee how thou mayest surely avoid it."

"Ha!—now thou speakest. Tell me—now."

"Make thy escape as speedily as possible from Sicily!"

"Out upon thee! Wouldst trifle with me?"

"Nay—not so. I do but speak the truth."

"I know better!" cried the king, forgetting himself in his anger. "Thou dost mock me, old man!"

"Pyrrho," spoke the priest, bending upon the monarch a stern, strange look, "thou speakest as thou actest, with wisdom far from thy thoughts. But there is danger enough to threaten thee already without my punishing thee for thy impious speech. Yet I will open to thee more than thou hast asked for: The net is woven about thee, and the bird which thou hast thought might peck the meshes away cannot help thee."

"Ha!" exclaimed the monarch, with a quick start. "What meanest thou?"

"I see," pursued Agrippa, bowing his head, and pressing his right hand upon his brow, "a fairer star than thine. It arises in thy heavens, and crosses thy course; but in no way can they conjoin. The two must remain separate for ever!"

The king forgot his anger in a moment, and gazed upon the speaker with intense eagerness.

"Cannot conjoin," he muttered. "What is this star that follows mine, and will cross its course?"

"It is now swerved from its true course, as though it would meet and mingle with thine own; but it cannot be."

"Speak more plainly, I pray thee!" cried the eager monarch. "What of the star? Whose is it?"

"I should say it was a maiden, young and fair; and she is one whom the gods will protect."

"And does her star of destiny course on towards a throne?" asked Pyrrho, in a low, eager whisper.

"Why askest thou that?"

"Because I would know."

"It has a most wondrous course," said the priest, again bowing his head, and speaking as though from revelations that were being gradually made to him.

"What is it?—Whither does it lead her?" And as the king asked this, still in a half-hushed whisper, he worked his way nearer to the astrologer.

"'Tis a throne!" said the old man, slowly lifting his head, and gazing into Pyrrho's face.

"And shall she never be mine?—never come to me with her destiny?" the monarch asked, now wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement.

"It cannot be," the priest said, emphatically. "The heavens do not lie."

"Never."

"Never. Wouldst ask more?"

"Not now—not now," replied the king, speaking huskily and hastily. "I have heard enough." And as he spoke he turned towards the door, which he opened himself.

With quick, long strides the monarch hurried through the great court of the temple, and when he reached his horse he leaped into the saddle at a single bound. He spoke not a word to his attendants, but rode direct to his palace, and sought his private closet; and having summoned a page, he sent for his chamberlain. He paced to and fro like a chafed beast while he was alone, and when his minister came he stopped, and gazed fixedly upon him.

"Donatus," he finally said, in hurried tones, "whom should I trust if I could not trust thee?"

"Not one in all the world, sire," answered the chamberlain. He seemed a little uneasy at the king's strange look, but he spoke freely.

"I wish I could see thy heart, Donatus."

"Here, sire, is my sword," readily replied the favorite, at the same time drawing his weapon, and extending the hilt to his master, "and here is my naked bosom. If there can be a wish in thy soul to prove me further than thou hast already done, see how calmly I will give thee my very life in the proof."

"No, no,—put up thy sword. I will not doubt thee. It were foolish in me to do so. But there be not many whom I can trust."

"I think thy chief officers are all faithful, sire; and even the soldiers are ready to serve thee."

"Aye—but how if my power over them were to weaken? If they saw me falling, and thought they alone could save me, how many would put forth their hands for my salvation? Aye—how many! how many! Ah, Donatus, but few! but few! But I will not fall! I will seize upon the fate while it is in my hands! I have seen the Priest of Diana—the great Agrippa of Abydos—and he has read what he thinks is my fate. He told me of Ianthe!"

"Ha! Did he?"

"Not by name, Donatus—not by name; but he told me of her so plainly that a child could not have mistaken the sign. He said there was a star—a fair and lovely one—that arose after mine, and would cross my path; but he said it could never conjoin with mine. He said 'twas the star of a maiden, young and fair; and when I asked him if her star of destiny pointed towards a throne, he said, it did. Then I asked him if her destiny could never be united with my own, and he said, nay. I asked him again—and he told me, never!"

"This is wondrous," said the chamberlain. "But dost think he read the stars aright?"

"I dare not question his power to read," replied the king; "but," he added, with a furious stamp of the foot, "I dare to question the power of the stars themselves, to rule and bind me as they will!"

"Hush, sire!" spoke the minister, trembling with superstitious apprehension. "Thou art daring the power of the heavens!"

"I care not what I dare," cried the king, still furiously. "I dare assert my own right as monarch of this realm; and I dare maintain that right even though ten thousand priests of Diana spoke their soothsome edicts against me! And now, by the scepter of Jove, I'll marry the maiden this very day—aye, within this very hour! What thinkest thee of that?"

"Thou wilt do as it pleases thee," replied Donatus, trembling.

"And it pleases me that the maiden's star of destiny shall only meet me in my path, and mingle with mine own. All the powers of heaven and earth shall not thwart me now. The priest told me enough. Ianthe's star points towards a throne, and my danger was, that she would not be mine. But she shall be! I'll raise her to the throne—thus fulfill her destiny, and save myself! Donatus, go thou and call the chief officers of my realm, and bid them attend me in the great throne chamber. Make all hast—let not thy feet rust upon the pavement now."

When the chamberlain was gone, the king sent for the chief of the eunuchs, and the black slave soon made his appearance.

"Mestor," the monarch said, "how is the lady Ianthe?"

"Well, sire; and seemingly more contented."

"Ah—does she mend in her way of sorrow?"

"Aye, greatly, sire."

"Then perhaps the thought of sharing my throne is not so terrible to her, after all. But, Mestor, go and bid her prepare to meet me; and do thou bring her to me in this room within the next half-hour."

"Thou shalt be obeyed, sire."

"Fail not, upon thy life. Conduct her hither, and alone."

When the king was once more alone he stamped his foot triumphantly, and strode forth as one who goes to victory.

"Within the hour," he cried, shaking his clenched hand aloft, "I'll prove that the soothsome priest, and his stars to boot, can be o'ermatched by the Sicilian king!"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

WILD ANIMALS ON THE OSAGE.

BY AN OLD STEAMBOAT CAPTAIN.

Let me tell you what different kinds of animals I saw from the deck of my boat, some years ago, on my first trip up the Osage river. I suppose the country is now pretty well settled all round there. It was altogether wild then; only a few Germans settled here and there, out of sight, and many miles apart.

The animals I saw seemed to be perfectly in a state of nature. They acted carelessly and naturally, just as if they felt at home; only when they saw my boat coming up they would look surprised, as if they didn't know what to make of it.

At that time few, if any of them, could ever have seen a civilized man, for so wild and unfrequented was that part of our country, that the United States Government had offered a reward to the first steamboat which should go up the Osage that year; and I was attracted in part by that notice, and gained the prize.

My position and circumstances were very favorable for making observations, my deck being considerably elevated, the day fine, the air clear, the weather pleasant and attractive to the brute creation, and my view unobstructed in all directions. On one side of the river the country was low and level, extending far off in prairies; while on the other was a range of steep, rocky, broken bluffs, much resembling the Palisades of the Hudson, which present a wall, in most parts perpendicular, for miles along the western shore.

My observations commenced very soon after I left the Missouri and began to steer up the Osage. Let me mention the birds, reptiles and beasts in the order in which they came in sight, beginning with those I saw in the water, and afterwards those on land.

First. A splendid flock of swans, of which I had the good luck to kill three or four.

Second. A deer, swimming across the river, with his whole body sunk under water, and only his nose above the surface. Being frightened by the approach of my boat, although he had nearly reached the shore, he turned about and swam back again to the side from which he had started.

Third. Rattlesnakes crossing the river in great numbers.

Fourth. Adders in abundance.

Fifth. Hoop-snakes. These serpents do actually sometimes form themselves into a hoop, by taking their tails into their mouths, and move by rolling over and over on the ground. To do it well, however, they should have a hill to go down, and when it is a steep one, they get along quite finely.

Sixth. Water-snakes. Plenty of these fellows, of all sizes.

Seventh. Jumpers. These snakes will jump a rod at a spring, in a straight line.

The preceding animals I saw in and near the water. On land I observed the following:

Eighth. Bears. One of these I saw on a bluff, standing with his head out of the bushes. He looked at us a few moments, and then walked out upon the grass, turned and struck for his hole, and disappeared.

Ninth. Several varieties of land-snakes, near the shores.

Tenth. Various animals which I could not certainly make out, moving round under some of the old trees which grew on the banks, and bent their branches over into the water.

Eleventh. Deer. A number of these graceful and active creatures, near and distant, lying down, grazing, rambling, or running and leaping, alone, in pairs or small droves, near and distant.

Twelfth. A large animal, which some of the crew thought to be a light-colored bear, and others a catamount. I thought it was the latter, as it seemed to be shaped much like a cat. We had not a very clear view of it.

Thirteenth. A wild cat. That is a formidable beast, though not very large. It is very active, and sometimes very bold.

Fourteenth. Raccoons in great numbers; one of which fell a victim to a hungry catamount.

Fifteenth. An opossum.

All these I looked on that day as curiosities. I got more familiar with them before I had finished my voyages on the Osage.

VALUE OF INGENUITY AND INDUSTRY.

Both the main and the hair springs of watches are made of steel first drawn into wire. In the former description of spring, the workman gives to the material its wonderful elasticity, by hammering it out upon an anvil; it is then ground, hardened, coiled, and tempered by blueing as we see it. The manufacture of the latter article has frequently been selected as an illustration of the extent to which the value of a material of small intrinsic worth may be raised by the application of industry and ingenuity. "A pound of crude iron costs one cent; it is converted into steel; that steel is made into watch-springs, every one of which is sold for about two dollars and a half, and weighs only the tenth of a grain; after deducting for waste, there are in the pound weight 7000 grains; it therefore affords steel for 70,000 watch-springs, the value of which, at \$2.50 each, is one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars!"

DOLORES.

BY EMMA ALICE BROWNE.

"They called him dead—they told me he was laid In yon old forest." SALLIE M. BRYAN.

Where art thou? Which of all the glorious stars
That burn in heaven guides thy spirit's way?
Where art thou, love? The pallid rose of day
Leans her fair face against the twilight bars
Blushing, to hear the lover-winds go by—
As I blushed once—hearing thy footsteps nigh!

Where art thou, red-lipp'd Allan? The sad Eros
By melancholy, shadow-haunted streams
Draw the pale mantle of perpetual dreams
About their solemn brows—as God once drew
His awful shadow o'er thine eyes of blue—
Thy grave is covered with the yellow leaves!

Here kept we tryst in the bright summers gone—
Here the sweet moon and stars their glory rained
Down the still purples, till our thoughts unchained
Sought the dim islands of that sea unknown,
Whose waves of mystic splendor cover thee—
Oh, my Beloved! lost to earth and me!

THE APPLE GATHERING.

A STORY OF OLD TIMES.

BY MARY W. STANLEY GIBSON.

It was in one of the late harvest months of 1855, and I had been spending my summer on a farm in New Hampshire, in company with my cousin Lucia, a laughing, good-natured, curly headed creature, two years my junior, whose very existence seemed one perpetual outbreak of fun. We had scandalized the grave farmer and his wife all through those happy months by hoeing, planting, riding on full and empty hay carts, and nearly cutting each others "understandings" off with the great scythes the workmen hung up on the trees while they went into dinner—they had thought us wild Arabs, I dare say, when they caught us in the very act of smuggling "Deb," the old brown mare, into the pasture, from which we had inveigled her by a dish of oats, long enough for a delicious ride through the "New Road;" and looked grim at our escapades in the house, and at the iniquities of our water spaniel, "Jip," who had a face like a christian, (I dare say he was more than half a one,) and always selected the time of family prayers to perform feats for our benefit that would have made a Chinese owl die with laughing. But after all, the bark of these good people was very much worse than their bite, and they grew reconciled to seeing us noisy and happy, long before we left them.

The busy time was almost over on the farm. The hay was stacked or safe in the great barns—the corn stalks had been cut up—the grain housed, and the land dug over. Nothing remained but the apples to be gathered, and Lucia and I had long had the promise of assisting in this undertaking. We talked about it a week beforehand, and after entering into consultation with the farmer's wife, it was decided that we should combine business with pleasure—invite all the young folks in the neighborhood to assist, and wind up the day with a supper and a dance on the cool greensward of the orchard. I knew, quite well, why I wanted this plan carried out. It was not exactly for the sake of the farmers' lads and lassies from the neighboring hill-sides—I was not a farmer's daughter and I wanted nothing of them. But there happened to be a young gentleman in the neighborhood whom I had known well in the city, and who had danced and flirted with me during all the parties and assemblies of the previous winter without seeming especially fascinated by my charms. He was rich, handsome, and of good family. Now was the time to bait my hook for him—now, when I had him as it were, all to myself, and could hope to secure the prize. So I said carelessly to Lucia—as she sent out the invitations—

"Mind and send one to the hotel for Alfred Clavers, my dear."

She looked up and pouted.

"I am sure we don't want him—the stiff thing! I saw quite enough of him last winter."

"Why, you never met him but once in your life!"

"And that was once too often," she said, with a queer look.

"Well—come he must—we cannot very well get out of that. He has been very civil to me here and elsewhere, and as he is traveling through New England to see all there is to be seen, it would be a pity not to give him a chance to make acquaintance with the natives."

"The natives are much obliged to you," said Lucia, with a disdainful sniff—"and as you happen to be one yourself, the less said about them the better. If he must come, I suppose he must, but I know he will spoil all the fun."

So the invitation was duly forwarded to the hotel, and answered on the appointed day, by the gentleman in person. I introduced him hurriedly to Lucia, who escaped as soon as she could and went to look after her other guests. He looked after her with an expression I did not like.

"I have seen Miss Howard before," he said, musingly. "We met last winter."

Now, though he was too thorough a man of the world to praise one woman to another, I felt uneasy at the way in which his eyes followed her about. And if he had not been very much struck with her in the city, he would never have remembered her in the country, six months afterwards—I knew him too well for that. So I made up my mind to keep him out of her way, and by way of keeping this wise resolution, exerted myself to the utmost to be agreeable and amuse him.

"Heigho!" he sighed, at last, and looked at me with a wicked smile. "Do you remember, *mon ami*, our pleasant evenings of last winter?"

"As if I could ever forget them," I answered, glancing over my fan. I dare say he longed to burst out laughing—only he did not dare—and I might have done the same thing, if I had not been trying to persuade myself that the *penchant* I felt for the good-looking scapegrace, was actually love.

"You flirted shamefully though, with Colonel Lander—and I was ready, at one time, to blow my own brains out, or his—I hardly know which," he remarked.

"It would have served him right."

"Do you mean that you really did not care for him?" he asked, drawing his chair a little nearer my sofa.

"Not one whit."

"Ah—if I could have believed it, I might have——"

He paused, and bending down with an infinite grace, kissed my hand, and looked into my eyes and sighed.

What a pair of simpletons we were—or rather what a simpleton *I* was! His manner actually deceived me for a moment, and perhaps, if we had been left alone he would have talked himself into the idea that he loved me, and I should have been Mrs. Alfred Clavers to-day—as I thank my lucky stars that I am not! But the door flew open just at that interesting moment, as a matter of course, and Lucia flashed in—(she never went into a room like any one else,) and after her, Jip—who sprang up in my lap, and flourished his bushy tail in my eyes, and rubbed his cold nose against my cheek, till I had to leave my seat and go with him to the door, in self-defense.

I think Lucia saw how matters stood, for she laughed heartily.

"We are waiting for you, good people," she said. "Mr. Clavers, I see you are at your accustomed business again. Did you not promise your sister Mary better fashions this spring?"

I stared first at one and then at the other in utter bewilderment.

"Why—do you two know each other?"

Clavers would not speak, but looked both sulky and sheepish, but Lucia seemed to think it fine fun.

"We met in March, wasn't it, Mr. Clavers?—and his sister Mary is a friend of mine—an old school friend—and I know all about him—much more than I wish I did," she added, with a saucy glance at him.

"And yet you never told me—neither of you did!" I cried out.

They had the grace to blush. And then Lucia mended matters by saying—

"He is such a scapegrace—or was—that I was not particularly proud of his acquaintance, and did not choose to proclaim it far and wide. But if you two worthies have finished your sentimental reminiscences, will you have the goodness to join us in the orchard? It is great fun to see you—you who know yourselves to be the two greatest flirts in Christendom. I am not at all afraid of your eloping with each other. You are too much alike, and diamonds do not cut diamonds now-a-days in this world of ours. Will you come now, or is there a sigh or two to be heaved yet? Mr. Clavers, I hope you are not thinking of gathering apples in those light kid gloves."

She called the dog and ran away through the garden, laughing as if her heart would break. Mr. Clavers slowly drew off his gloves and took up his hat. He looked so crestfallen as he went down the yard with me, that I could have laughed too, if I had not been so angry. As it was, I thought it best to stand upon my dignity for a moment or two.

"You and my cousin seem to be two very mysterious creatures," I said coldly. "Pray were you hatching any gunpowder plots at your father's house, that neither of you could mention the simple fact of your having met there?"

He bit his lip angrily.

"You know quite well that all your cousin has said is nothing but nonsense."

"Why didn't you tell me, then, that you had seen her in March? What did you stand so quietly to be introduced to her to-day for? Why did she never mention your name to me? I have been her friend for six months—her intimate friend—and women sometimes talk of such things, when——"

"When they are curling their hair," he broke in with a scornful smile. "I know all about it."

"When, or where, is nothing to you, sir; but they do talk. And yet till to-day I never heard her speak of you. Commend me to a woman for craft and cunning."

"I need not come to you to tell me that," he said, bitterly, and a light broke in upon me.

"Ah, I see. Did she take its playthings away from it, and when it cried for the moon, couldn't it have it?"

"Oh, laugh away. I am not the first man that set his heart upon the moon. Yet for all that she goes on shining, and we may howl and grow frantic if we like it—it is a pretty amusement."

I longed to box his ears, and here, too. I knew the signs of a heart disease well enough, and saw that whatever she might have done, he loved her still, which was a very encouraging prospect for me.

"I thought as much," I said, sagely.

"I have not a doubt you did; and I dare say, if you had been at hand, you would have helped her, and clapped your hands with joy at the *grande finale*. She made a fool of me, if you must know it, as you have made fools of a score of men I know. I wish there was a law against flirting—I wish you women could be sewed up in sacks, and flung into the river for it."

"And what would be done with the men?"

"Pshaw, they do *not* flirt; at least, if they do, you have not the hearts to feel it as we do!"

"Pretty dears! They have always been noted for their tender, constant hearts, I know."

He broke away from me in a rage when I began to laugh, and took a roundabout way to the orchard, in order to cool his temper a little before he presented himself before his lady love. I mused over the little comedy I had just got a glimpse of, and was lost in admiration at this new insight into the nature of a woman. Here I had believed, for six long months, that I knew every thought of Lucia's little heart. How many more refreshing secrets were there locked up therein? It was a great comfort to me to remember certain Bluebeard's closets in my own mind, into which her hazel eyes had never peeped, and over whose threshold she could never set her foot. And poor Clavers; how he was recompensed for his trifling with me, and many another like me. It was with that serene feeling in the breast that often comes up when we witness another's discomfiture, (angels that we are!) that I went out and joined the apple gatherers on the orchard slope.

It was a pretty scene. The orchard itself was just behind the great barns, and opposite the road and the house. It extended a long way in a straight line, and the trees were planted in regular rows on either side of the field, leaving a wide space, level, green, and like an avenue, to the bottom. There was room enough and to spare for a quadrille, and thirty-two couples were going to "stand up" at the supper, and dance by the light of the moon, and the lanterns which were to be hung from the branches of the trees. This last idea was Lucia's; and she had ordered the music, too—three violins and a French horn.

When I entered, however, the place looked little like a ball-room. Carts drawn by oxen stood here and there along the avenue, and barrels, baskets and pails were under every tree, while a busy, laughing crowd of young people shouldered each other about, and gathered the fruit with the greatest good humor. I joined them, and was pressed into service at once, and made to gather the golden pippins that fell from the branches of a young tree named "Ruth's early," after the daughter of the former owner of the farm. Poor Ruth Way. She had grown up—become a wife and mother—and now the grass was growing over her grave in the village churchyard, and we, whom she had never seen, were jesting and enjoying ourselves as we shook the apples from her favorite tree. After we had cleared the branches we went to others—to Helen's, Winnie's, Laura's and Minnie's russets, to Lucia's summer sweetings, and Jip's (even Jip had a tree named for him) Jip's Baldwin grafts. We worked till the sun was almost down, and not till the last cart was going up towards the barns, laden with the empty baskets, and the poles and ladders, did I stop to look around me. Thus it was—

"Oh, how dusty you are!" and "Your face is stained with sweet apple juice," and "My dress is torn," and "Where is Lucia—where is Lucia?"

Sure enough, where was she? That was a question which must be answered, and I begged the company to proceed to the house under the care of Lucia's cousin and brothers, who would furnish all things requisite for the toilet in the two large front chambers, while I went to call her, if, indeed, they did not find her there before them. They complied after much laughter and joking, and I had the satisfaction of seeing them safely over the bars, and then I remained standing in the middle of the dismantled field, with my dog whirling around me in frantic circles, and barking like an escaped lunatic. I knew well where Lucia was—at least I fancied I had seen her strolling down through the trees to a meadow not far away, where we often sat upon a great rock, and watched the sun go down. I leaned against a tree and sighed. Something—I hardly know what—saddened me beyond measure, and I doubt if I ever saw more clearly than I did at that moment, how poor and paltry a thing our life really is. A song—a tear—a smile—a sigh—and its romance vanishes forever, and then, Heaven help us! Nothing remains after that among "fashionables" but tea and scandal for women, wine and cards for men. It almost seemed to me that the time had come—my time—just then, and I was as weary, and disheartened, and disquieted as I have been many a time since, when I have staked almost my existence upon the prize I sought to win, only to see it fade into the thinnest air just as I thought I had it safely in my grasp.

My dog seeing me look so sober and silent, cut short his dance, and came up to me and licked my hand, standing on his hind feet to do so, and stretching up till the prints of his little toes were distinct in the moistened ground. A dog or a horse are the only friends that try to console you with their whole hearts if you are sad, and I patted his head and went down towards the pasture. A little gate led down into it from the orchard, and Jip wriggled himself through it, and began to hunt in the stone wall for a squirrel he fancied he had seen.

Meanwhile I had my squirrels to hunt out, and found them much sooner than he did his. The Sunset Rock stood midway down the pasture towards the road, and was so large that we were obliged to climb its rough sides to seat ourselves on the top, and so white that we fancied it must be very like that strange figure of salt—that statue of Lot's unlucky wife, which I fully expect to see when I go traveling in the East. On this rock a figure was comfortably seated, with another a little lower. He might as well have been at her feet—for it was Alfred Clavers and my cousin Lucia. When I saw them I knew as well that they would be married as I know it now.

It is hardly worth while to shirk pain in this world—it will come to us in one shape or another, whether we like or not; and I fancy the best way to take it is the way in which boys take floggings at school, with teeth set, hands clenched, and a doleful future consolation for the present sting, in the thought that it must end sometime. I had learned this useful lesson earlier than most women, and I now proceeded to put it in practice. That a little sharp pang of jealousy and disappointment shot through my heart at the sight of the happy couple, I am not going to deny. In the first place, I had fully intended to marry Mr. Travers myself, and had been at no end of trouble to make myself agreeable to him; in the next place, I supposed I had my cousin's entire confidence; and perhaps a mother finding suddenly that her son has taken to sowing "wild oats," and would almost sell himself, body and soul, for some baby-faced girl he has only known a month; perhaps she, I say, stumbling by chance upon one of his love-letters, feels much the same pain that I felt when I saw my great mistake. Such things as these seem to take the ground from under our feet, and we hardly know where we are standing. And thirdly and lastly—since the days of Mother Eve, it has been but natural for one woman to be jealous of another, who eclipses her; and I profess to be no better than the rest of my sex. I walked down behind the Sunset Rock, in no very amiable frame of mind, yet too proud to let my misery be seen. The grass was short and smooth—they did not hear my step, and Jip was far behind me. When I came up to them, Mr. Clavers held Lucia's hand in both his, and she was bending over him as he sat at her feet, and saying:

"I could forgive you all, as far as I am concerned, Alfred. I *do* forgive you. But what I cannot endure is the thought of all you have said to many other women without meaning it——"

"By Heaven, I mean it now."

"Yes, I think—I am sure you do."

She looked at him with her kind eyes, and he kissed her hand. As he had kissed mine in the parlor of the farm-house, some three hours before. I felt a dreary wish that we could all fall from the rock, then and there, break our necks, and make an end of it, and be buried comfortably, side by side, in the old churchyard where we had walked so often.

"But you have much to answer for," Lucia went on. "I hate to think of your flirtations, Alfred. And as for my cousin, sir, I am afraid you have treated her most shamefully."

He laughed carelessly.

"Oh, set your heart at rest, my love. A greater coquette never stepped. I think it was a drawn game between us, and I do not suppose she ever gave me a serious thought in her life. She never will pine away for me or any other man!"

"The most sensible speech you ever made in your life, Mr. Clavers," I said, going up and leaning against the rock. After that speech I was perfectly composed, and could bear to see them together with a steady eye and voice since my secret was so safe.

They started up and peered over the edge of the rock in great confusion.

"Is that you?" asked Lucia, blushing.

"Who else should it be?"

"We—we came down to look at the sunset, and I thought I would show Mr. Clavers our rock," she went on.

"Very well. I hope he likes it."

"Have you been in the field long?"

"Not long enough to hear very much," I said, laughing; "only just long enough to see that there is a pretty good understanding between you, and to hear Mr. Clavers make a very flattering speech about me, which reminded me of an old proverb I have heard."

"And what is that?"

"He might not like to hear."

"Pshaw! Tell me."

"It is a favorite with you and me: 'People that live in glass houses should never throw stones.' I dare say he has heard it often."

The poor fellow colored up to his eyes, and looked imploringly at me. He had the more reason to do so, for I knew even more about him than Lucia did, and might perhaps have spoiled his wooing, if I had felt so inclined. But it would have done me no good, and would only have made them both wretched; and I held my tongue, and also made up my mind to be very great and magnanimous, on the spot.

"The company have gone to the house," I said. "The apples are gathered; and there is a great inquiry for Lucia."

She started up with a look of contrition.

"Oh, Alfred, I must go. Don't keep me."

She called him Alfred, and put her hand upon his shoulder! I was tempted to knock it off, but controlled myself just in time, and said, quietly—

"Before you go, Mr. Clavers, will you answer one question in a plain, straightforward way, as I shall ask it?"

"Certainly—if I can."

"Oh, I have no doubt you *can* talk frankly if you *will*."

At this malicious speech he winced and colored again, and Lucia looked at me very gravely, and said, in a low tone—

"How can you be so unkind to him."

"Sit down, Lucia; you are a goose. Now, Mr. Clavers, were you talking about marriage to this silly child when I came up?"

"Yes."

"Very well. I take it for granted that you are in earnest this time at least."

"I do not think *she* doubts my word," he said, drawing himself up proudly, and pointing to Lucia.

"She! Oh, she would believe black was white, if you should tell her so; and the reason is that she loves you. All women who allow themselves to fall in love, must expect to turn into fools."

"Take care! it may be your turn some day," said Lucia, archly.

How little they suspected all I was feeling, even then!

"Mine," I answered, carelessly, "mine came long ago—and went—and came again. I could not begin to number the times my heart has been pierced. At present, I am constant to one individual."

"And that is?"

"Myself, my dear. But that has nothing to do with your case. Mr. Clavers I know, Lucia, and I know you thoroughly. You will put off telling each other what you ought to say till it may be too late, and then there will be a fine uproar. Now tell me, as a sober, steady friend of both parties, if you love the child well enough to make her your wife."

"God knows I do!" and he was going off into a rhapsody on the spot, but I stopped him.

"Do you love her well enough to marry her at once?"

"To-night—in an hour, if you like! Are you going to help us off?"

"No. People never elope in these matter-of-fact times. But I give you credit for being in earnest, at least. And you, Lucia—do you think you could be content with him?"

"Oh! you know that well enough," she said, making a shy, fond movement towards him.

"Not I. When young ladies do not choose to give me their secrets I never imagine they have any. But if you are both of one mind upon the subject, I must talk to my uncle about it. You say I can persuade him into anything—I think I will talk him over about this."

"You are an angel!" cried out Lucia, as she *threw her arms about my neck and kissed me a score of times. I submitted, but I would have* preferred Jip's caresses a thousand times over. There remained only one thing to do or to see, and then I could *leave them to themselves.*

"*If you are really so fond of each other*," I said, calmly, "God grant you may soon be happy together. Put your arm around her, Mr. Clavers. I have a strange fancy for seeing you together."

He did so; and as she looked up fondly in his face he bent down and pressed his lips to hers. I had got more than I bargained for, and a jealous pang shot through my heart that nearly drove me wild. I said to them that they were to go up to the house, and report themselves to the assembled company; and if any one asked for me, I was coming home by the New Road, and would be with them before the dancing began.

Then I went down with my dog into the pine woods; and what passed in my heart as I lay with my face upon the cool ground, is only known to my Maker and myself.

MINNIE AND ARIEL.

A MODERN FABLE.

There was a little boat moored in a harbor. It was a rocky harbor, the shore was bleak and uninviting, and the little boat had not much delight in her haven, or much enjoyment in her duties and labors. By-and-by a large skiff, handsomely painted and strongly made, rode into the harbor. The little, humble boat admired the new-comer exceedingly, but never dreamed of speaking to one so bold and grand.

But the stranger was not long in making the acquaintance of "Minnie," for so was the little boat called. And "Ariel" was the name of the stranger.

"You are a sweet little thing," said Ariel, as he neared the half-frightened Minnie.

"A sweet little pet of a thing—but you are too sober and sad. It is not good for you to live alone in this gloomy harbor; come out with me—I will take good care of you."

"Oh! no indeed," returned Minnie. "I cannot go out. This harbor, though gloomy, is safe. I am not used to the open sea."

"Nevertheless come out, dear Minnie, and you shall be happy. Why, you will die shut up in here with none to care for or sympathize with you. You are like a nun—come now, be sensible and away with me."

"I am afraid. I do not want to go. I wish that you would not ask me."

"But it is for your own good. Can't you believe me?"

"I fear that when I am out on the sea you will cast me off, and then what would become of me? for if once I went out with you I should be at your mercy. I could not take care of myself. Besides, I do not think it right to put so much confidence in a stranger."

"Who do you call a stranger? I have been in your company these many days. You know me well. I know and love you, and want to do you good and make you happy. Could you not be happy, darling Minnie, out on the sunny, open sea, with me?"

All this time the beautiful skiff had been dancing gracefully by Minnie's side, and trying, but too successfully, to interest her in him. Minnie certainly thought that there could not be in the wide world a boat so admirable as was the gallant and gentle Ariel.

She could not answer his last question. Lie, she would not, and to confess the *truth* she was not yet prepared.

Ariel saw his advantage, and, being used to such scenes, he knew exactly how to follow it up, and the result was that Minnie went, half scared, half delighted, out of the harbor with Ariel, the pleasant and the gay.

"I wish you would give me your oars, my Minnie," said Ariel, as they moved tranquilly along.

"What shall I do without my oars?" asked Minnie in surprise, and in no hurry to relinquish them.

"You are afraid of, and distrust me yet, Minnie. Why will you do so? If you do not wish to give me pain, you will not show such doubt of me. I do not want your oars if you wish to keep them from me."

"Oh, don't be offended. I am sure I ought to be thankful if I can, by any thing of mine, give you pleasure. Here are my oars."

"But what would become of me were you to forsake me NOW?" burst forth from Minnie, as a conviction of her helpless condition flashed across her.

"I never *will* forsake you, my darling pet. I shall *forever* be to you *just the same that I am now*. Be of good courage, nothing shall do you harm. Your confidence in me shall cost you nothing. Wind your lines about me. Let us be as near to each other as we can. How sweet you are to me. How beautifully formed you are."

"Oh, no, no," murmured Minnie, abashed, for she knew well that she was *not* beautiful, but only a poor, little, plain boat. Yet her breast swelled at the words of Ariel, and she was thrilled with grateful love, for she thought it *might be* that she did *seem* pleasant to her companion; and she knew that if she really *did seem* so, she must indeed be dear to him, for she knew well that the eyes of love alone could see any charm in *her*."

Thus she felt her sides expand with joyful emotions as she moved silently along by Ariel's side.

"Tell me your thoughts," he said. "Tell me, tell me, why are you so silent? Cast your lines about me, and talk to me, my darling."

But Minnie *could not tell* a tithe of her enchanted thoughts. She, therefore, only sighed as she wound her lines about Ariel.

"Why sigh?" he said, in tender accents, "are you not satisfied?"

"Ariel," said Minnie, in a troubled voice, "these lines that you require me to wind about you are not like the lines of some boats—mere insensate cords of hemp—they are all *alive* and *full of feeling*. Where they cling now they will grow fast, and, oh! Ariel, what you have persuaded me to do now you must not repent, for to undo the work of this day will destroy *me*, and be harm to you also. I must do as you bid me. There is in me no power to resist your will; but *I pray you* do not require of me aught that shall end in woe and misery to me. It was at your option to pass me unnoticed or to woo me to come forth with you; now that you have won me, oh! tell me, *and more*—forgive me that I need to ask—that you love me, and will never push me off or forsake me. What *should* I do upon this great, wide sea?"

"Peace, foolish one. Why will you make yourself so unhappy? I tell you that I mean you well. I love you, and always will. I will stay by you through sunshine and through storm. You may never fear that I shall fail you. I think those Ariels who lure away little, confiding Minnies, only to forsake them on the wide waste of waters, are worthy only of destruction. I have no patience with them. I would rather *die* than hurt the feelings of one who *trusted in me. Ride gaily o'er the tide, Minnie; cast all fear and doubt to the wind.* Be happy and cheerful, and you will make me so, and all will be well."

Minnie could no longer mistrust that frank and *warm hearted (?) friend; and the two went rapidly* out of sight of the land.

For awhile all was pleasure, affection, and mirth between the two. Minnie had now come to see altogether as Ariel had desired. She was devoted to him, and happy in him, reposing in firm faith on his promises.

They were now in the strong gulf stream, and going rapidly—some whither, Minnie did not consider where; all she thought of was the delight of Ariel's company; she believed that no mischief could befall them as long as they were together, and he true to his word.

But now a change came over Ariel—something had frightened him. He would return to the land; and with that intent he threw out his oars and spread his sails; for the wind was against the tide and in the direction of his desires."

"We have gone too far, Minnie; it is all wrong; we must make haste to return."

"Where are my oars?" cried Minnie. But they could not be found. "Oh! do not leave me alone," cried the poor little boat, seeing her companion parting from her side. "You said you would not. Wait, wait for me—or, rather come with me still, for *I* cannot return—I have no oars. Do not leave me. You said you would share my fate; and this dreadful tide, into which you have drawn me, is too strong for me. I cannot bear up against it. *Give me back my oars*, Ariel, or continue to go with me down the tide."

"I did not think that you would ever tempt me to destruction, Minnie; how can you desire me to continue in such danger? But my duty bids me to seek to save myself. You should encourage me in my duty, and should have resolution to enable you to do yours also. Minnie, I am vexed that you should allow yourself to be so soon disheartened and depressed. The more you give way to such gloom the worse it will be for you. As for me, I ought not to remain where I am in temptation. It is best that we should part. This is the least to be regretted of any thing in my intercourse with you. I am sure it will be best for both in the end. Minnie, good-bye."

And the alarmed Ariel, politic and specious, hastened away.

"At least, unbind my lines. Oh! set me free, for you are tearing me plank from plank," shrieked poor Minnie in her agony, but all in vain. Ariel could not, or would not hear. With righteous decision he was plowing his homeward way, and the lines that were fastened about him, strained and cracked, one by one, until poor Minnie was indeed free; but it was only to sink, disjointed and broken, beneath the sea.

Our fable is not a perfect or a skillful one; but it is *plain* to those who have need to read its meaning.

There is a moral to it, which the reader is at liberty to study out—better so than to write it.

And yet *one* moral may be spoken—

All small boats near the shore should keep;
Nor venture where the water's deep.

USEFUL INFORMATION.—Useful information in a simple and enticing form is what we want—and the greater and cheaper that information is, the sooner we shall become an intellectual and a moral people.

CONFIDENCE SOLICITED GENERALLY BETRAYS.—Never trust a person who solicits your confidence, for in nine instances out of ten you will be betrayed.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1869

OUR ONLY TERMS.—Single copies, $2 per annum; two copies, $3; four copies, $6; eight copies, $12. Any person sending a club of eight copies at $12, or more than eight copies at $1.50, the party who sends us $12 for a club of eight copies, or $1.50 for each copy, will be entitled to a *copy free*. Terms invariably in advance. No subscriptions taken for a less period than one year. Checks, subscribers may be sent, however, care is exercised in the selection, to pay the American postage, which is half a cent a copy on every paper. The terms of all agents paying bankable taken at par. When a draft is sent, or money conveniently be sent, it will be refunded, as it will prevent the possibility of the loss of money by mail.

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In addition to the above exceptional array of distinguished authorship, (nearly all of whom write exclusively for LEDGER,) we are favored with occasional contributions from scores of other writers of celebrity. Thus we are enabled to offer attractions which cannot be equalled, or even approached, by any other paper, and we pay more money for contributions by popular and celebrated writers than would make a great and good paper, than is paid for any two other weekly papers in the country; and, as a legitimate result, our circulation is larger than the combined circulation of any two others.

SCHOOLS AND NEWSPAPERS.

To schools and newspapers civilization owes the crown of intelligence. These are the chief bulwarks of free society; the mightiest secular agencies of Christendom. Next to the Church in religion, for their better spirit and morality, it is not surprising to say that religion is largely provided for its diffusion to them. Both educators and disseminators, their functions are still unreasonably different—the school laying the basis of knowledge, and the newspaper applying and building it with unparalleled speed and universality, among men.

It is now four centuries and a year since printing commenced its morals, with the "Codex," and some thousands of years since book-making became the art of books. So, too, though universities date back into the distance of Roman and Grecian are as old as the "classic groves" of Helicon, modern common schools have transcended them all in universalizing intelligence. Of our modern newspapers are the grandest of new-time institutions, and no sheet that they are issued can we need and quote what Governor Berkeley, of Virginia, wrote to King Charles, in 1671: "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing-presses here, and I trust there will be these hundred years, for learning breeds up heresies and sects, and all abominations: God save us from both!"

And it was an hundred years, and more, before free schools or newspapers were at all common in our country, where the hindrances to them have been least. But what a revolution since Berkeley's day—in politics, religion, science, newspapers, and schools. Less than two centuries ago the New World is rid of kings and parliaments, and with every branch has its free school—or school open to all—there are now five hundred newspapers published in the land. It is enough to make the ghost of Berkeley wince, and would astonish the shades of Gutenberg and Faust, were they practicable. Let us be thankful that we live in an age when free schools and newspapers are all around us, as beacons and shields. Let us sustain the schoolmaster and encourage the printer—multiply the schools and the newspapers, and freedom and knowledge and virtue will flourish as the world!

TO YEARLY SUBSCRIBERS.

Yearly subscriptions to the LEDGER are beginning to come in at a rate which assures us that the understanding the fact that we have had ample experience of that sort of thing, our old subscribers seem to have borne abundant fruit. Not a single mail subscriber took his LEDGER from a post-office, we are more than pleased every instance, a large addition to our subscription list; and where clubs existed before, they still exist, and have now been formed. This is gratifying. "*A shoe that the* LEDGER *is liked by the farmer's and men of all sorts of callings, it will make its way by its own inherent merits*," is the language of a letter from a single paragraph on this topic, but simply without to caution subscribers to send on their addresses in full, and legibly written. To do these, the name of the post-office, county and state in full. Let there be no abbreviations, but write boldly or illegible scrawls. Make everything unmistakably plain and clear and certain, and then your letter, whether from us you and we are concerned, will be sent to their proper destinations in a proper manner.

A CURIOUS SIGN.—The old system of hanging those who deserve it by the neck is again coming into popular favor. Rascality has become so rampant, and homicide so frequent, that a universal sympathizers with cut-throats have relieved the public of their doleful sentiments and conscience now "dance on airy nothing" without a veil from the thread of any "reference." This is a shocking sign of the times. Crime must be punished.

(From the New York Commercial Advertiser.)

MOODY VERSUS PARSON FUN THE NEW YORK LEDGER.—" "—Such a remarkable instance of liberality and enterprise on the part of Mr. Bonner, and of such consummate self-confidence as to be the object of the Mount Vernon Association on the part of Mr. Moody, demands special notice. Many have supposed that the circulation of the New York Ledger was already so immense that additional circulation could not be of any advantage to it, but Mr. Bonner's ambition as a journalist evidently rises with his success, and he is not content to rest on his laurels as a most brilliantly successful paper. We all know well what generous pecuniary remuneration Mr. Everett has received over the country delivering his eloquent and masterly oration on Washington, whenever a multitude could be gathered to contribute to the Mount Vernon fund; and it greatly adds to the relish of gratitude due to him from the friends of the Mount Vernon Association that for the sake of contributing an still further aid in their enterprise he has entered for a whole year the burdensome task of writing for a newspaper.

[We will commence the publication of "The Mount Vernon Papers," by the Hon. Edward Everett, in the issue of the LEDGER dated January 1st, 1870, being the first number for the new year.—Ed. Ledger.]

A NEW CONTRIBUTOR.

We are gratified at having it in our power to announce that we have made an arrangement with the Hon. EDWARD EVERETT to write for the NEW YORK LEDGER during the coming year. The particulars of this arrangement will be found in the annexed correspondence. Mr. EVERETT, as nearly everybody knows, is a man distinguished in literature, in science, in official life. In Europe, as well as in our own country, he is universally conceded to be the greatest of living orators, and one of the most thoroughly accomplished and profound scholars and statesmen that the world has ever produced. It is certainly a striking indication of the dawn of a new era in literature to have such a man contribute to the columns of a weekly periodical,—a man who, among the numerous positions of honor and trust that he has occupied, has been President of Harvard College, Governor of Massachusetts, United States Senator, Minister to England, and successor to Daniel Webster in President Fillmore's Cabinet. And why should not the great intellect of the world disseminate their thoughts through the newspaper press, and especially through a paper of such unprecedented circulation as the NEW YORK LEDGER paper not even a solitary issue of which has at any time during the past eighteen months, embracing the whole period of the panic and the hard times, numbered less than an edition *de bien handed thousand copies*, and the circulation of which has been constantly increasing and permeating the whole country. What other channel of publication can compensate can equal this? And when there is such an opportunity for any man, why should he hesitate about creating a taste for a purer and a higher literature among the millions of people, and not avail himself themselves up in their closets and retire to contemplate the past, instead of engaging the pages of a bound book, inaccessible to millions of the population? We thank EDWARD EVERETT for the good example he has set in this respect, and the people will thank him for it; and positively, we believe, will add much to the influence and the weight of his character on the popular side and the side of liberty.

A few years ago, when we engaged FANNY FERN to write a tale, for which we paid her one hundred dollars a column, we informed our readers that we should spare neither labor nor expense to make a new paper. Subsequently, when we are fulfilling that promise we leave it for them to judge. We have, in addition to the regular contributors to the literary services of excellent and popular storywriters like Mrs. SOUTHWORTH, Mr. COBB, and Mr. BENNETT, we have added to our list such distinguished contributors as Miss SIGOURNEY, Miss CARY, Wm. ROSS WALLACE, Gen. D. PRENTICE of the "Louisville Journal," and Mr. JOHN G. SAXE; and, in the various departments of the LEDGER, we have such contributors anonymously from the pens of eminent writers, that, though we do not feel authorized to name of our prominent institutions of learning. But, now comes the Hon. EDWARD EVERETT, and, dear reader, if we do not hereafter add any more such names it will not be our fault. Indeed, if only one FANNY is the world's and, indeed, the men may be said without injustice of our contributors—they having no equals in their respective lines.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN MR. EDWARD EVERETT AND MR. ROBERT BONNER.

"LEDGER OFFICE, NEW YORK, Oct. 1, 1869.

DEAR SIR:—I have a proposition of a somewhat peculiar character to make to you, which I trust you will not deem unreasonable, and which I hope you will favorably entertain and accept at your earliest convenience.

You are aware that I have been for many years engaged in the publication of a newspaper which has attained a circulation nearly equal to that which is published in the English language. I have been and am entirely prompted, in the course I have taken in this matter, by a desire to benefit the people. On the other hand, among other grounds of business policy, I have been influenced by the conviction that through the "Extended Circulation" in which you attain in the columns of a widely-circulated paper, you will be able to do more good than through any other channel of communication. I may not as things are, to the importance of adding on larger a sum, than I am now paying for literary contributions, but I am well begun to furnish the articles, as soon as the introduction of the present year, with the best literary contributions that I can obtain,—in the course of the month in fact,—and I am prepared to pay you a much larger sum than I am now paying, at the end of the year for any services in the regular supply.

What I have now to propose is that you shall write for me the inclosed weekly article in pursuance of the terms and conditions stated.

I shall venture to call the articles that furnished by me "The Mount Vernon Papers," earnestly desiring to secure that honored name for the series, and to make it a tribute to the memory of Washington.

You are right in supposing that no pecuniary benefit accrues to the Association from the sale of the publication of the "Mount Vernon Papers," to which you allude in the letter of Mr. Moody, published in the New York Commercial Advertiser. I have paid the Association for the privilege of using the name, and I am willing to pay a large sum for

THE YOUNG MOTHER AND BABE.

BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.

While o'er the cradle of thy babe,
When sleep his blue eye seals,
The prayer to Him who gave the boon
In silent fervor steals,
And other boasted pleasures fall
Like dry leaves from the tree,
Remember, mother, sweet and fair,
Such was my love for thee.

And when his small, adventurous feet,
First unto thee shall glide,
And his young lisping lip prefer
Thy smile to all beside,
A payment for thy many cares
That rapturous thrill shall be,
And, gentle mother, sweet and fair,
Such was my joy in thee.

Now, as advancing shadows stretch
Across life's western vale,
And the lone heart 'mid gathering graves
Doth in its courage fail,
Or sadly counts how few the props
That firm and stable prove,
Forget not thou, thine early warmth
Of sacred, filial love.

For though, perchance, the new-found joys
Eclipse its ancient claim,
As fades the taper's ray beneath
The glowing noontide flame,
Still, may the *old* love and the *new*,
With one intent conspire
To train and tune thy listening soul
For Heaven's immortal choir.

RICHARD HOFFMAN.

A TALE OF LOVE AND RETRIBUTION.

CHAPTER CIV.

FIDDLER DICK'S LAST TRUMP.

For several nights Mr. Meadows and his assistants had been constant lodgers at the house of Bet, but without effecting the object of their visit—the capture of her husband.

The worthy detective began to fear lest his prey should escape him, and expressed as much to the convict's wife.

"Yer don't know Dick," replied the woman, "as I does: he is on the scent, *I can feel* it; if he aint found out the crib yet, he soon will; he'd beat the fox for cunning, and, for the matter o' that, yourself into the bargin. Yer may smile," she added, "but I tell yer that he would."

"To-night, then, we will return again."

The above conversation took place on the morning of the fourth day, after the departure of the lodgers, when only Bet and Nora remained in the house. As the speaker quitted the kitchen, the former threw one of her shoes after him, for luck, as she expressed it.

Some of our readers may smile at this and think it puerile, but the throwing of the shoe is a very ancient custom, and still practiced in many rural districts, especially in Yorkshire, where the ceremony of throwing the shoe after the bride for good luck is called trashing. The shoe in connection with marriage may be traced to a period anterior to Christianity. In Deut. xxv., the ceremony of a widow rejecting her husband's brother in marriage is loosing his shoe from off his foot; and in Ruth we read, that it was the custom in Israel concerning changing that a man plucked off his shoe, and delivered it to his neighbor. Hence Mr. Thrupp, in "Notes and Queries," suggests that the throwing a shoe after the bride was originally a symbol of renunciation of all authority over her by her father or guardian, and the receipt of it by the bridegroom, even if accidental, an omen that the authority was transferred to him.

There is little doubt but the writer is correct in his surmise as to the original intention of the act, although now only regarded as a sign of good luck. *Query, by a wretched old bachelor, who has been smoking a cigar with us*—Has the origin of the custom been lost sight of in consequence of the bride *no longer* recognizing the authority of her husband?

Horrible wretch!

That same night a motley group was collected in the lodging-house in the Mint, where Poverty held carnival. Once within its walls, the desolate widow threw aside her cap and weeds; the pious father of five small children, whose white pinafores were carefully taken off that they might be kept clean for the next day, forgot his affectionate solicitude, and sent them with a crust hungry to bed. The fellow was an artist in his way, and knew that a good meal would rob their cheek of its paleness, their eyes of the imploring, anxious look, which, like the aforesaid pinafores, formed a part of his stock-in-trade. The cockney sailor—whose experience of the ocean extended probably no further than the sea of Battersea—shifted the model of the ship he had been wrecked in from his head, where he had borne it all day, and began counting his gains. If large, the precociously intelligent little urchin who, in his peregrinations, rode upon his shoulders back to back, shared in his supper. If not, the dear little tar, who was *honely hanxious* to fight the battles of Hingland, was sent supperless to bed. Not that the child was ever deprived of a proper allowance of food, for it was part of the old rascal's make up that the boy should look well and chubby, especially as he did the pale, haggard, and interesting himself—or, rather, gin did it for him.

Vendors of small wares, whose industry was an excuse for thieving, area sneaks, fortune-tellers, with here and there some unlucky child of misfortune not yet fully initiated into the life he had been driven to, others who could scarcely recollect a different one, made up the groups at the tables which filled the kitchen, whose stifling atmosphere, redolent of beer, tobacco, and gin, proved almost too much for the well-disciplined nerves of Mr. Meadows and his assistants; who, after partaking of a very frugal supper, *which they brought with them*, retired—as was supposed—to rest, in the small room they occupied by themselves, at the end of the passage, whose window opened into the back yard.

No sooner had her customers retired to rest, and the strong bolt upon the door which cut of all communication between the upper and lower part of the house, been securely drawn, than Bet tapped at the entrance of the chamber in the passage.

Instead of three bricklayers out of employ, the characters they had assumed, the policemen in uniform made their appearance. They were active, determined-looking men, perfectly alive to the danger of the service they were upon. The third, who wore plain clothes, was the master-mind that directed them, the ex-inspector, Mr. Meadows.

"You may sleep," he said, "securely; we shall watch till morning."

"But I can't sleep," replied the woman, who was in a state of maudlin sentimentality, produced by the united influence of her feelings and gin; "arter all, you know he is my husband."

The detective smiled.

"Who, if he had his will, would very soon be a widower," he observed; "no doubt but he would contrive to get a very comfortable living out of your establishment. It pays well, Mrs. Fiddler Dick."

"Pretty well for that," answered the mistress of the house, tartly.

"And with such a home he might soon get another wife to assist him to manage it."

Bet's touch of sentiment vanished.

"Good night," said Mr. Meadows. "Should you hear any noise in the passage, remain still until we call you."

To insure his directions being obeyed, the speaker drew a cleverly-contrived screw from his pocket, and as Bet disappeared, attached it to the door between the passage and the kitchen.

That done he extinguished the light, and with his two companions patiently disposed himself to watch till morning, or the arrival of Fiddler Dick.

The situation of the three watchers was anything but an agreeable one. Stationed like statues, afraid to move or speak, in that cold, dark passage, whose walls, reeking with damp, sent forth an unwholesome chill, highly suggestive of rheumatism. One of the men had placed himself close to the shutter of the window, his companion by the door, both ready to pounce upon their prey in the event of his making his appearance, which as the hours dragged on they began to despair. As for their chief, no amount of disappointment could weary his patience; he must not only have possessed a talent, but a positive taste for the profession he had devoted himself to.

Virtue they say is its own reward—a melancholy truth, for in this world it rarely receives any other; we say rarely, for the exception occurred in the present instance. Just as they were about to abandon all hope of affecting the capture for that night, a low, hissing noise broke gently on their ears.

The officers were instantly on the alert; they recognized the peculiar sound made by a spring saw as its teeth bite into the iron.

Evidently some one was attempting from the outside of the house to cut through the bolt of the

FIDDLER DICK PLAYS HIS LAST CARD.

shutter. The men scarcely ventured to draw their breath.

Several times during the operation the saw was withdrawn, and there was a pause in the work, at which the experienced Mr. Meadows, however, felt no alarm lest the operator should escape. He knew that it could only be for the purpose of oiling the instrument. He proved right in his calculations; it was speedily introduced again.

As a slight click announced the completion of the operation, he gently drew a pair of handcuffs from his pocket; not stout, vulgar bracelets, such as any detective might carry, but delicately finished instruments of steel, that locked with a spring.

In the field how frequently have we marked the difference between the young and the old sportsman; the first, all impetuosity and eagerness, frequently loses his bird by impatience; the latter waits tranquilly till it is fairly on the wing, takes his aim coolly, and bags his game, without bustle, haste, or exertion, as if the affair were a mere matter of course. Nothing but his Manton misfiring can disappoint him.

Mr. Meadows and his assistants were old sportsmen; they betrayed neither haste, excitement, nor impatience, but remained cool and collected till *their* bird should rise; in other words, it was not till the shutter was pushed open, the sash raised, and Fiddler Dick within the passage, that the two officers pounced upon him. To seize his arms, bring his wrists together, whilst the ex-inspector passed the handcuffs, was the work of an instant.

"That will do," said Mr. Meadows, satisfied by the click of the instrument that his prisoner was secured.

The mountebank was, literally speaking, so taken by surprise, that for several instants the power of utterance was denied him. His first sign of returning self-possession was to give vent to his feelings by an oath: the next, to make a desperate dash at the window to regain his liberty.

The movement was intercepted.

"Quiet, quiet!" said the captor, much in the tone of a groom addressing a restive horse; "it's of no use."

"What is this for?" demanded the ruffian.

"You will know in good time," was the reply.

"A man may break into his *own house*," added the prisoner, "when he aint got no key; there's no law agin that, I suppose."

"Certainly not," answered Mr. Meadows; "the observation shows a nice appreciation of the law."

By this time the speaker had unbarred the door, and admitted Bet and the servant Norah, who had been waiting the event.

The latter brought a light with her.

When husband and wife met there was something truly fiendlike in the expression of both—hate, impotent rage, and a ferocious thirst for revenge in the countenance of the former; a mocking grin of triumph on the features of the latter.

The woman was the first to break silence.

"I don't think yer will come back agin this time, Dick," she exclaimed. "*It's for life now.*"

The prisoner shuddered.

As yet not a word had been said respecting the murder of Andrew Silex or the robbery at the Home Farm, and he began to recover courage.

"I aint done nothink," he observed, "and this house is mine."

Bet set up a hearty laugh—the assertion seemed to tickle her fancy.

"Yourn, is it?" she said; "well, p'r'aps 'tis; pity you won't have much time to enjoy it. A comfortable crib, Dick—wery comfortable."

Mr. Meadows had no wish to prolong the scene; for him the excitement of the chase was over.

"Is this your husband?" he asked.

"That's him."

"I told yer so," said the prisoner; "yer can't do nothink to a man for breaking into his own house."

His wife laughed again—she evidently enjoyed the joke exceedingly.

"Certainly not," replied the officer; "but the same immunity does not extend to breaking into the houses of other persons."

"*Or cuttin' a throat*," added Bet.

The countenance of Fiddler Dick changed fearfully; he felt that it was all up with him, and experienced, by anticipation, no doubt, a certain very unpleasant choking sensation in the throat.

One of the officers held the light, while Mr. Meadows proceeded to search his prisoner. The first article taken from him was a large knife, such as butchers and pig-jobbers use. It was evidently quite new. Bet guessed the purpose for which it had been purchased, and congratulated herself upon her escape. A short pipe, tobacco-pouch, twenty-three sovereigns, and a handful of loose silver, completed the inventory of the pockets.

"Them's mine!" exclaimed the woman, greedily.

"Patience, patience!" replied the detective; "the law will decide."

"Law!" interrupted Bet, indignantly; "aint I as good as his *widder*?"

"Not yet, my good woman; whatever you soon may be. Come," he said, turning to the wretched prisoner, "where is it?"

"Where's wot?"

"The parchment stolen from the Home Farm."

"Don't know what you mean. I aint got no parchment, and know nothink about the Home Farm—never was at such a place in all my life."

"That's a lie," observed his affectionate wife. "Look at the corners of his mouth; I can allays tell when he's a lyin', by them."

It was not to be supposed that so experienced a person as the ex-inspector of police would remain satisfied with the assertion of his prisoner, especially when the latter had so deep an interest in concealing it; the parchment being the chief evidence to connect him with the crimes of robbery and murder.

Proceeding methodically in his examination, Mr. Meadows first unbuttoned the murderer's waistcoat, and carefully felt the lining. Satisfied that it was not there, he next examined the coat.

"I thought so," he said; "give me a knife."

"There's one, sharp enough for any think," observed Bet, pointing to the one taken from her husband, which a policeman held in his hand.

Despite the struggles of Fiddler Dick, the garment was ripped open, and the long-suppressed codicil to the will drawn forth.

"That does yer, don't it?" demanded his wife, in a triumphant tone.

"And it does you, too," observed Fiddler Dick; "it makes the gal Lilly yer hated, a lady; yer know, as Mike said, she would one day be worth her weight in gold to him. I could a-got five thousand couter for that bit of sheep-skin, at least yer might a-got it for me; that's what I came for—nothink else."

At the words "five thousand pounds," Bet started with astonishment—perhaps the idea struck her that she had acted too precipitately.

"I aint a liar now, am I, Mr. Meadows?" said the speaker.

"Perhaps not," replied the officer, "as far as regards the value of the parchment. As to your intentions towards your wife," he added, pointing to the knife, "she is the best judge of them."

By this time the first gray streaks of morning had penetrated into the narrow, unhealthy court; and the officers, not wishing to encounter the mob of desperate characters living in the vicinity, at once proceeded to remove their prisoner, in a cab, to Union street police office, where, on their arrival, he was locked up in a cell to await the sitting of the magistrates.

A policeman was placed with him.

"Five thousand couter!" muttered Bet, as the vehicle drove off; "and that gal gets a fortin, and I only a hundred! The cheats! the villains! That Mister Meadows, with his 'ily tongue, is wus than a Jew! Five thousand couter!" she repeated, as if there was a fascination in the number; of which, however, she had not a very clear perception, it being far beyond her power of arithmetic to calculate. All she knew was that it was a great many hundreds—something enormous.

"You forget that big, ugly-lookin' knife," observed the servant.

"So I does, Norah," replied her mistress; "so I does. But Lilly—a fortin! Bad luck to the day I ever split on him!"

About an hour before the arrival of the magistrates, the policeman who had been placed in the cell with Fiddler Dick came running into the hotel where Mr. Meadows had retired to refresh himself after his night's exertions. From the terrified countenance of the man, he guessed what had occurred.

"You have neglected my orders," he said.

"My wife brought me some breakfast," replied the officer, "and I—only——"

"You quitted the cell, like a fool?"

"Yes."

"And the prisoner?"

"Has hanged himself."

The detective hastened to the station, and found the intelligence but too true. No sooner had the wretched mountebank been left alone, than he formed a noose by tying his cravat to one of the bars of the windows, and anticipated by his own rash act the hand of justice.

In the course of the day an inquest was held; a verdict of *felo de se* returned, accompanied by a severe censure on the negligence of the policeman, who was dismissed the force.

As we shall only be anticipating events by a few months, we may as well state here that Bet never recovered the effects of her disappointment; sober or drunk, the wretched woman frequently repeated to herself the words, "Five thousand couter," and she died with them on her lips.

Norah succeeded her as landlady to the lodging-house, as well as to the "yaller *sharl* and *bunnit*." In speaking of her mistress, she declares to this day that Bet was a rale lady.

Mr. Morton was seated in his office, deeply engaged in drawing up a brief for his fair client, when the detective was announced. The astute man of law read in his features that his visitor had important intelligence to communicate.

"Have you succeeded in apprehending the rascal?" he inquired.

"Last night."

"Where is he?"

"Dead," was the laconic reply.

Mr. Morton both felt and looked disappointed.

"It was not my fault," continued the detective. "I directed an officer to remain in the cell with him. It is impossible to find brains for all the force."

"A suicide?" observed the lawyer.

"Yes."

"And the parchment?" demanded the gentleman, eagerly.

Mr. Meadows drew it from his pocket, and placed it in the hands of his employer, who hastily perused it.

"As I suspected!" he exclaimed, in a joyous tone. "In the event of Sir Norman's death without male heirs, the issue of Allan Boothroyd come in for an equal share of the property. As for the ruffian's death, Meadows," he continued, "it is not likely to prove of any great consequence. A public example has been lost, that's all."

The ex-inspector observed that they were becoming rare.

"The rarer the better," observed the lawyer. "You have managed this affair capitally—shown more than tact—positive genius."

Opening his cheque-book, the speaker drew for a sum so liberal, that it astonished even Mr. Meadows.

"Are you satisfied?" demanded Morton.

"Perfectly," said the latter, pocketing the cheque. "I need not say that you may command my services day or night, in any affair you may require them. I am amply paid."

The lawyer once more carefully perused the codicil, which, as a matter of course, it was necessary to prove at once.

"One step more," he said, "only one, and the right of Lillian to half the Meldown estates will be as clear as the sun at noonday."

That step was the discovery of some legal proof of her father's marriage, without which all that had hitherto been done was useless.

CHAPTER CV

GAME TO THE LAST.

In the multitude of counselors we are told there is safety. If legal counselors are meant, we at once demur to the truth of the proverb, and our experience ought to have some weight, seeing how dearly we once paid for it. Lady Boothroyd, however, had not arrived at the same conclusion, a circumstance scarcely to be wondered at, perhaps, considering that it was, as the playbills express it, her ladyship's first appearance in the court of chancery. On being served with a copy of the bill, filed in the name of Lieutenant Marsh, as next of kin, and natural guardian to Lillian, she at once consulted a formidable array of the most eminent members of the bar, and secured as many opinions, as what *rich client* will not, favorable to her case.

It is a little extraordinary that no two lawyers, unless engaged on the same side, ever see the same case in the same light, then their unanimity of opinion is equally remarkable. Far be it from us to hint that this singular divarication arises from any mental obliquity of vision; no doubt it is one of the idiosyncrasies of the legal profession, which the legal mind alone can explain, never intended to be understood by the uninitiated, and what is more, *it never will be.*

On one point the learned gentlemen laid great stress; the plaintiff had not stated in his petition to the court where the marriage of Allan Boothroyd and the mother of his niece had been celebrated; any hitch, discrepancy or doubt in that respect, and the case would be at an end—not a leg to stand upon.

"After all," observed Serjeant Kite, "the residue undisposed of by will appears to have been exceedingly small."

"Under twelve thousand pounds," added Counselor Flaw, referring to the accounts rendered by the executors.

"The residue is not the real object," replied her ladyship, who, as usual, was present at the consultation.

The three gentlemen learned in the law had long since suspected that such was the case. The observation had been intended as a feeler.

"It is an unprincipled attempt," continued the speaker, "to introduce the daughter of a common soldier, Barny Gee—a fellow who, had he lived, would have been tried for poaching on the Meldown estate—into my family, to give her a name and position in society. As the widow of the late Sir Norman," she added, "and the guardian of his only child, I feel bound to resist it."

"Very natural!" "Highly proper!" and "Commendable spirit!" were the ejaculations with which the declaration of their client was received. Still, somehow her advisers did not feel quite satisfied; better judges could not be found, perhaps, of the distinction between the reason and the pretext.

"It is a little to be regretted, Lady Boothroyd," said Mr. Twine, the well-known queen's counsel, in his blandest tone, "that you commenced your operations to guard the honor of your family against a spurious claimant to bear its name *quite so soon*; in fact, before any stir had been made by her abettors. The abduction of the child," he added, "was rather a *strong measure*; and my learned brothers and myself wish to be in a position to explain it to the court, as the very most will doubtless be made of it on the opposite side."

"Nothing can be easier," answered the lady, coolly.

The learned counsel had all along been convinced that such was the case, and were delighted to hear the assertion from her own lips.

"On the very night the father and child arrived in the village," continued the artful woman, "the former was shot in an affray with Sir Norman's keepers; in fact, it was to avoid persecution for a similar offense—he was a determined poacher—that Barny Gee enlisted for a soldier."

"This is important," observed Kite, making a note.

Flaw nodded approvingly.

"The death of the wretched man," resumed her ladyship, "naturally created a certain amount of sympathy amongst the inhabitants of the village, all more or less addicted to the same pursuit, and not sympathy only, but a bitter feeling of hostility against my late husband, who, a few nights afterwards, was shot at in his carriage."

"By whom?"

"That we never could discover. As a wife, I naturally felt anxious and terrified, more especially as one of our keepers had been murdered on the night when the father of this young impostor met his death. It was impossible, after such an outrage, we should remain at Meldown."

Again the notebooks and pens went to work.

The case really began to turn out much better than they imagined. A baronet shot at by a gang of poachers—sure to enlist the feelings of the chancellor, a keen sportsman, on their side; a noble family driven from their home—great scope for eloquence.

"And the abduction?" *quietly insinuated Mr.* Twine.

"I am coming to it," said his client. "Woman-like, I naturally pitied the orphan left entirely dependent upon her relatives, an old weaver and his wife, and offered to place her in my school."

"Very generous!"

"Noble! forgiving!"

"My offer, however, was refused," added Lady Boothroyd, without heeding these complimentary ejaculations; "and, seeing that the presence of the child only served to keep up dangerous, irritating feelings, I certainly did cause her to be removed from St. Faith's. I have not the slightest hesitation in making this admission to you, gentlemen; but if you consider it important, can easily prevent my share in the transaction ever being proved in a court of law."

"By what means?" inquired Serjeant Kite.

"By hanging the agent I employed," answered her ladyship, firmly.

The counsel exchanged looks with each other; evidently they began to suspect that their client was no ordinary person.

"I have no wish to do so," continued the speaker; "but, if necessary, I can produce proofs that the man, Mark Rayner, whose name you will find in the plaintiff's bill, is the murderer of my late husband's gamekeeper, Springthorp."

"Proofs!" repeated the three gentlemen learned in the law.

"Irrefragable ones," was the reply.

After this statement, the legal advisers of Lady Boothroyd, who, we need scarcely observe, was the real defendant in the suit, instituted *pro forma* against the executors, came to the conclusion that the ugly affair of the abduction now appeared in quite another light; that it could be explained, or, at the worst, palliated, by the strong influence of feelings which even the law respects, and perhaps got rid of altogether by a little dexterous tact.

Tact! what a sharp, ringing sound the word has; and how useful the thing itself is. There is scarcely a purpose or relation in life to which it may not be applied.

After all, what is tact? In nine cases out of ten, a wedge to *split* a moral difficulty, not solve it; a cloak hiding the threadbare garment beneath—giving the wearer the false credit of being a well-dressed man; a varnish which distracts attention from the mediocrity of the painting; a lie implied, not uttered, and all the more dangerous from bearing specious resemblance to truth.

And yet, how many persons feel proud of possessing this dangerous quality; on the same principle, no doubt, which induces vulgar pretence to trick itself out with pinchbeck, when unable to wear gold.

As Chancery barristers, the eminent counsel consulted by Lady Boothroyd could not possibly undertake the conduct of a criminal case. It would have been against all professional etiquette—*infra dig.*; so they advised her to have recourse to the services of Mr. Gringle. The affair they considered quite in his way—the gentleman being as remarkable for expedients as he was known to be unscrupulous in the employment of them. With his assistance, they doubted not but on the day of hearing, one important witness would be absent. A practical illustration of what is generally understood by tact.

The morning on which the consultation between the widow of Sir Norman and the lawyers took place was the one appointed for the meeting in Kensington gardens, to which spot Lillian and La-

dy Bell, attended by our hero and William Thornton, repaired. There was no occasion to introduce the cousins, each recognized the other by the like near to herself. Their appearing together in a court of justice must, as the lawyer at once perceived, convince the most sceptical of the tie of blood between them.

"It was not my fault, dearest Lillie," observed Alice, "that your home has been amongst strangers—your claims disputed; my heart, the first moment I heard of your existence, acknowledged them; but I had not forgotten the part my prisoner in the old pavilion at Meldrum Park, or his words she uttered, and have frequently both repeated for asking questions on the subject."

"I am sure it is not," answered our heroine, her eyes filling with tears of pleasure; "but my home for years has been a happy one; so happy," she added, "that a sister's love alone could have increased its felicity."

Lady Bell and our hero were introduced to the lawyer by Mr. Bellingham, although projected by the description she had received, could not avoid expressing her surprise at the singular resemblance between the two girls. Indeed, of course, did not feel so much astonished; the portrait at Meldrum Park had long since made him familiar with it.

As Alice drew from her pocket the chain and locket, to present to her cousin, she could scarcely avoid smiling at the expression of William Thornton's countenance; it was the utmost possible. Doubtless, he expected her—although she no longer believed it as have been the gift—to vest it for the moment of parting with it. But leaven are such exciting emotions.

The sister interview proved a happy one for all; not excepting even William, who felt, perhaps, a little disappointed when Lady Bell and Alice, who she had already secured that of our hero—an arrangement which enabled the cousins to enjoy undisturbed the few brief hours of intimacy permitted them.

"No doubt you think me very cruel," observed her ladyship; "but, as Hamlet says, 'I must be cruel only to be kind.' It is my nature and 'tis she added, speaking in a more serious tone, "that Lillie and Alice should spend their lives."

"Your presentation is scarcely a necessary one," replied the gentleman, "they appear to be aware of each other, both being so good as they are beautiful."

"Very pretty, and true as pretty, no doubt," answered the kind-hearted woman, with a smile. "Take example from your friend here; see how prettily he leans it."

"And will he stay?" exclaimed the lover, with a slight, only a very slight tone of impatience.

"Richard is a happy prince; he can breathe indecent to contend against, can see Lillian daily: it would be unreasonable indeed to expect the same plan. My position is a widely different one. Lady Bonthorpe knew me—was aware of her treachery—as far as to intercept the letter in which I declared my passion, and answer it in her daughter's name; who, ignorant, of deceitful of the contents, yielded to the selfish ostentation of her father on the death-bed, and promised to become the wife of Sir Orme."

Lady Bell looked serious; a promise made to a parent, under such circumstances, in her clear judgment, appeared a binding one; sacred as an oath, in answer entered into by the contracting of vows.

"I pity you," she observed, "pity you both; but Alice will keep her word."

Poor William began to look very miserable. His fears had suggested the same thing.

"There is but one hope," added the speaker, "if I judge the character of Sir Orme aright—the rejection of her hand by Alice."

"He has already been rejected."

"By you?"

"By the victim," narrowed the lover, bitterly.

"Then he is an unmanly, capricious fellow," exclaimed her ladyship, with the utmost scorn of the noble viscount's selfishness; "and were I a——" but, no, no, she added, suddenly checking herself, "it would be wrong, very wrong to counsel that."

Whether the speaker, in her indignation, had been on the point of recommending the William Thornton to adopt hostile proceedings against his rival for a previous an exclusive claim to Alice's love, further than by observing that such a proposition is by no means improbable when we consider one of the noble, high-spirited character of Lady Bell; who, as the wife of a soldier, had naturally adopted some of the opinions and feelings of the circle by which she had been so long surrounded.

Here, for a few minutes, we must digress; promising, however, not to exact too much from the patience of our readers. It is necessary to explain that picture of life, to be falsified once, must perpetual the lights and shadows, virtues, vices, weaknesses, and errors; and that it would be unjust to blame the fidelity of the artist.

The author of "Richard Hoffman" is no advocate or even apologist of duelling; he considers it an act religion, and reason alike condemn, and which, thank Heaven, in the present age common sense has at last succeeded in rendering ridiculous.

To judge from the glances which the two gentlemen exchanged, they, unfortunately, did not think so.

When the cousins rejoined their friends, it was observed that the eyes of both were suffused with tears. Their address were again changed, and the heart of the lower sank within him as Alice absently took his arm; he remembered the words of Lady Bell.

"William," said the unhappy girl, as soon as they had separated from their friends, "I am about to inflict pain; and I cannot tell you how sorrowful the reflection makes me. We must return to London. Do not censure me, pray do not, before you learn how my reasons. *I have not break my word to my dead father.* I know all that you would say. I have urged it to my own heart and reason; but in vain. Great Heaven! I am myself now entirely reluctantly given; still, it was given, and must be kept; unless," she added, hesitating in a passionate flood of tears, "the grave should mercifully receive me before Lillian can claim its fulfillment."

This was a sad blow to William Thornton, who, for the last few days, had been indulging in visions of a happy future. Disappointment, however, did not render him unjust. The noble resolution of the sorrowing girl to adhere to the promise so solemnly given, increased his admiration of her character, although her kind every means a lover's eloquence could suggest to shake it.

"You may convince my heart," replied Alice, mournfully, "for it is weak, but you cannot use powerful an advocate there already, but not my reason, which tells me that happiness would not result from our marriage; the memory of my benefactor would glide like a spectre between us, poisoning our short-lived bliss. You might still continue to love me, but respect, without which love is but a worthless passion, would become extinct. Better die broken-hearted," she added, "than survive the loss of both."

"You wrong yourself and me!" exclaimed her lover, passionately. "What, blame the bird because it has escaped the fowler's snare? I censure the innocent lamb for flying from the wolf's embrace! never, never! Your father had no right to extract such a promise from you, to offer you a sacrifice at the shrine of his ambition, to tyrannize over you, even from his grave; it did not, it cannot, it shall not, control, and——"

"Hush!" said Alice, seriously; "deeply as I regret his conduct, I dare not blame it: *he shall never more judge his parent.* And now, William, it is better that we say farewell. It is a sad trial to me both; I feel that I am acting rightly, and the conviction will sustain me in the end. Adieu, and may one of me, very selfish, ever to confess my love; forgive my errors, and forget me if you can."

"Forget you!" repeated the youth; "how easy to advise, how difficult to accomplish!"

"Not so," replied his companion; "you have energies, talents, which must not be wasted in idle, useless sorrow. The world has a claim upon them —please distinctions within your reach, such as good men justly prize. In the achievement of these, in diffusing good around you, the sad past and the poor girl who loved you will be forgotten, and in time, William, you may find another——"

"Do you think so, then?" interrupted William Thornton. "You cannot think me the heartless, plastic thing your words convey, and deem this a time to waste upon you the gallant speeches which people can blot from memory's roll that your whose recollection will remain with the world's dreamt. Shall I tell you?" he continued, "when, and where alone I can receive such a lesson from the shrine in which it has so long been worshiped? —some fanciful shell, which, in the days of love for you, and the last flickering breath long treasuring upon my lips. Life and my love for Alice would still fade together."

Alice could only answer this passionate vindication of the constancy of her cousin by tears.

"But all is not lost," resumed her lover, in a more cheerful tone, "Lillian will not permit the sacrifice your heart can never sanction. I will see Lillian. If it is your wish to return to town, you will cheerfully pay down the value of the Meldrum estates to release you from this cruel bondage. Your cousin is a lovely, and accomplished girl, who, think not I would degrade myself by slandering my rival! I speak but the sacred truth. The claims of Lillian may possibly affect your fortune. I am not ignorant of that."

The poor girl recollected the words and looks of the viscount when he declared his love, and he begged, he would still claim her hand, but could not bring herself to deal aside the hopes of her lover by repeating or describing them.

As the speakers were about to quit the gardens of the hotel they encountered Lady Bonthorpe, who evidently recognized the lady; there was no mistaking, however, the expression of her dark, bold the glance he gave to justify his being noticed by the viscount, and the flush of red blood boil at the place of well-bred impertinence.

Are you acquainted with that person?" he inquired.

"I have seen him in society," replied Alice; "but for the moment I have forgotten his name. Yet stay—I recollect, it is Captain Chester; I met him at the house of Lady Bonthorpe."

The insolent, trifling in itself, led to more serious results than one. Sir Orme, especially who separated after a feud and lingering alive, was not disposed to let it rest in the heart of on of them, that the seemingly inconsiderable behaved to expose his wife, a girl under the age of the *affaire of indomitable will.*

The next day Lady Bonthorpe was informed by her lawyer, that he had been served with a notice, that plaintiff was about to move the court of chancery in favour of Lillian, as heiress to Meldrum Park, and all other wild, under which her late husband, Sir Norman, had enjoyed the Meldrum estates. It can scarcely be said that the intelligence took her by surprise, for she had long fearfully waited on its disappearance on the night of the murder of the steward at the Manor Farm.

Stone, even of what it termed the stronger sex, might have felt their courage fail under the accumulating mass of evidence daily brought to light, to confound her deep-laid schemes; but not so with the spirit of vengeance, which, in the present object in life, clung to it with a tenacity of purpose that would have driven her friends to other, for her energies rose with the difficulties that surrounded her, and, in the present instance, Lady Flint—the wife was too important to be intrusted with the secret—was the only friend to whom she could apply for assistance.

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Stone, even

MUSIC—A SONG.

BY C. D. STUART.

6. He has the music well nor sleep,
He is deeper than the pain
That throbs and aches within his brain,
All his rapture is again.

For the memory will not sleep,
When the heart is in the grave,
It has names of the cold,
And is condemned with the wave!

7. No manhood wails the joy
That has perished with the past,
And he pales cheek with fire,
In the heart and in the brain.

Give me wine of song divine—
Let me drink of the rich juice
That can drink the bosom dry,
Drink and fill, and drink again!

Give me wine of song divine,
Let me drink of the rich juice,
Which to-day, when beauty sings,
And the spirit flashes in the strain!

THE VIEWLESS AVENGER.

One sweet, mild morning in the month of March, 1834, a small family were seated at breakfast in a cozy log-cabin, near the bluff-banks that form the left bank of the Brazos, in the province of Texas. A slight glance from the reader will have showed it to be a recent settlement, for no signs of fields, gardens, or inclosed cultivation could be discovered. The island-grove adjacent to the house-dwelling had not yet been denied of its virgin ornaments, and not even a dim path appeared on the surface of the great green prairie, that stretched away beyond the cabin-clearing, in the sublime level of the trackless ocean.

The slightest survey within the house of the emigrants sufficed to prove that they belonged to the poorest class—the class of settlers, upon whose civilization has no home—without property or privileges save the servile right to toil for the profit of others—to create the wealth which it is living to enjoy. The only articles visible in the room consisted of a few rude, home-made wooden bowl table, some dilapidated plates, a tin-cup-pail, and the hunter's rifle.

But the repast itself furnished the most striking evidence of extreme poverty; as the coarse food on the table was dried venison, without bread or salt. Nevertheless, the paraphernalia of this unpalatable fare looked as if they might once have seen brighter days. The father, a middle-aged man of much physical power, with regular, if not handsome features, presented, to an observing eye, that masculine air of industrious thought and refined intelligence, which nothing can bestow except early and thorough education. Both the countenance and voiced traces of trouble and bitter disappointment, and troubled reflection seemed to be breed forehead, such as never had been swept by the slow fingers of time, while the black hair, which covered the brow beneath revealed a deep and gloomy darkness mingled with silver, like the shadow of an outlying memory born of some irremediable sorrow.

A lovely little boy of seven summers sat near the corner of the table, kneeling his plate of venison with as much apparent pleasure as if it had been some sacred ambrosia, fresh from a feast of the Olympian gods, while his happy visage and merry brown eyes contrasted strongly with the stern and careworn aspect of the parent.

On the opposite side of the board appeared a young girl about eleven years of age, whose sweet old face still seemed to shed virginity-glory in a mortal sight a more enchanting vision. There are some beings of such rare beauty, that no pen can describe their peculiar charms, because their loveliness has another analogy nor likeness in the multitudes of common life, and so it was with the picture daughter. Her form had already attained the full development of voluptuous womanhood, but nevertheless seemed still slight and child-like, from the ethereal grace of her motions and the perfect symmetry of her shape, so slender at the waist that you might almost span it with the measure of your two hands. Her face resembled a sunny dream—the love-dream of a poet—seen by the midnight sun, or kissed to sleep by the meridian moon on a bed of golden flowers; and yet it was like an incarnate smile of sunbeams from the sea of the purest essence of joy and innocence that could only be embodied in radiant flesh and blood. Her eyes, large, clear and sparkling, were of a laughing blue, deeper than any dye of the ocean, or cerulean tints in the stainless vault of Heaven. In fact, no words have sufficed for the picture of her—the delicious summer of the teeming south, with its light, wreathed with love-tears, crowned with red fire, suffused and warm with the juice of berries and bright blood of the grape, overflowing with health, happiness, and the nervous vitality of early youth.

As the coarse meal ended, a sharp and peevish cry of pain emanated from the beak part of the cabin, and a woman, shivering in the cold gray sunrays of fever and ague, rose from her pallet of buffalo skins on the floor, and rolled to a stool near the fire-place.

"Father," said the young girl, in a voice of affectionate entreaty, "why do you not get a doctor for mother? I am sure she grows worse every day."

"Lucas," answered the man, in querulous tones, "can you inform me where I shall be able to procure to be a physician?"

"Let him wait until you shall be able to pay him," suggested the daughter.

"Then must upon his books for credit to all eternity, for there is little prospect of my possessing any means this side of the general judgment," returned the father, with tedious bitterness of accent and manner.

The mother interposed in words of touching tenderness. "My dear husband, do not be anxious on my account; the chills are less frequent, and will wear out of itself in the course of a few weeks."

The patient kindness of his suffering companion moved that hardened man to tears, as he took down his gun, and remarked, in a mournful voice—

"I must be off on my day's hunt, or we shall have nothing to eat for supper." And he approached, and pressed his lips fondly to the pale leaves of his wife, murmuring, in a low, sweet voice—

"Mary, my love, do not give way to despair: if I have good luck to-day, I will go after the doctor in the morning."

"Stop, pa! Will mam have a kiss?" cried the intelligent boy, eagerly; and the loving father stooped down, and conferred the caress, as directed, while the beautiful Lucas also claimed and received a similar boon.

Oh! those celestial hours of the world-weary, laboring heart, the asylum of the wandering soul, the only ark for the divine dove of hope, whose wild wings can find no green spot on the gloomy waters of life's swelling sea, then art indeed the soils type and symbol of Heaven left on the earth, since the portals of paradise closed on our ruined race. Love, love and religion, every social and sacred institution, are cradled by the mild light of thy magical, fourth-estate, singing forever with the murmur of angel voices! To thee we owe the civilization which brings forth song and science, for thou dost teach the power of authority and the beauty of obedience, and all government is founded on thy lessons.

The previous history of this fallen man may be narrated in a few words. He had been a merchant of great credit and prosperity in a western Missouri, until he entered into partnership with a false friend, who used the firm's name to obtain an enormous sum of money, with which, and all the other available funds, he absconded, and left his associate an utter bankrupt. Then absolutely ruined, John Mallam, by the aid of a distant relation, managed to reach the wilds of Texas, where his sole means of subsistence, and that of his family, was the chase.

As he moved on over the green prairie, the face of the unhappy hunter gradually grew darker, until it looked awful as the angry gloom of a thunder-storm, and he muttered to himself, "I did wrong, foul wrong to my wife and children. I ought to have shot the base swindler like a wolf and taken by force the plunder which he had acquired by cunning. But that would have been called robbery and murder! What then? Has he not wrested from me the strength and staff of life? Is not the beloved partner of my bosom now dying by inches? Is not my daily doom worse than the total expulsion of the most cruel exactition?"

With these and other even wilder ejaculations, the pioneer continued his course until he arrived at a small grassy prairie on the banks of the Brazos, where the old Santa Anna crossed the river.

"I will enter," he said to himself in a mocking whisper, "and take one glass of the fool's-fire water, as the Comanches have taught even me. It have heard that it has power to drive away sorrow and care. Why should not I?" Then paused a not despair?"

Hallam approached the counter, and calling for brandy, poured out a tumbler almost full, and swallowed it at a draught. In three paces from the stream, and within the bend of the river, where the game was said to be very abundant, he had secured his boat on the sandy and level meadow of nature, gleaming with the most brilliant flowers, when an old Indian hunter, dressed with a trelling of strange fascination. He was, or seemed to be, about sixty years of age, with a large, boneman, apparently advancing along the road towards him, and a white horse of the same color was in vain for the arrival of the stranger. Accordingly, he sat down on a bed of violets beside his canoe, and, with his rifle across his knee, the field of radiant blossoms, and pondered, as was his first habit in every new adventure.

As the instant a strong breeze sprung up, the cloud sighed and sang mournfully in the trees, the evergreen branches above his head, and waved the dark moss like the long hair of a woman in sorrow, and, winged, whispering unearthly spells. But the gloomy hunter in his profound reverie heard not the dread sound, the dismal nothing but the sad voices of old memory, the funeral dirges of departed days—as if all the sorrows of his whole life were to be the last regret where he reclined, when, raising his eyes, he found a hostile Indian of the Comanche tribe on horseback, and springing to his feet, cocked and presented his rifle.

"Don't shoot, Hallam! for God's sake, don't shoot!" exclaimed the approaching savage, in a most grimace accent.

"High Wheeler!" said the hunter, in a voice clear, ringing, and dreadfully calm; "you made me believe you were dead. Why do you come here?"

"Hay Heaven! do you intend to murder me?" gasped the former partner, his lips and face pale as of a shocked corpse.

"No," answered Hallam, in appalling tones; "if you have manhood enough in your frame's soul to fight me on equal terms in the wilderness, you have your blood—blood for the beggary, that is the fair payment!"

"I will grant you the interview, as soon as we can find seconds," sneered Wheeler, hoping to decoy his enemy into a trap.

"Fool and coward!" thundered the lifetime hunter; "one of us two will die before we shall never leave this place alive! Dismount, or I will shoot you as the worst enemy of God and humanity!" And he took deliberate aim.

The other threw himself out of the saddle, and falling on his knees, implored wildly: "Oh! mercy! mercy! do not kill me! I am not fit to die!"

"Then get on, and battle for your crown life!" shouted Hallam.

"I have no weapons!"

"Use and villain! there is a brace of pistols by your holsters!"

"I will make reparation for all the wrong that I have done you, but I cannot fight you!"

"Then hand me the sum of which you robbed me!"

"I cannot now, for I have not fifty dollars about my person."

"We will soon ascertain the fact," remarked the hunter, as he advanced to examine the bulky saddle-bags of the foe.

But the latter slavered so much, or even more, for his money, than he had previously been for his life, that he insisted on himself search, crying fiercely, "If you shall not touch my property; I will have you hung the highway robbery!"

"For murder, rather!" roared Hallam, as he seized the other by the throat, and struck him with a cut of the revolutions which were adopted on the occasion. "Now, villain, you will pay me with your life for the money Frederic went to the house where Mrs. Morgan resided, but he was informed that she had gone to the city of Mexico, and would not be back for a week. So he would have to keep the money for her until she returned home.

Towns was an industrious tradesman, doing a fair business in the city of Mexico, and he was called upon to pay a note of four hundred and fifty dollars on the very day of his visit to the widow's house. When he went home to dinner he found the demand awaiting him.

"Well, my dear," said he, as he read the missive which had been left for him. "Mrs. Morgan has

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

DIRGE.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

I.

There is a feeling in the trees,
A sobbing on the shuttered eaves;
From floor to floor and I hear a moan;
Death's in the house! Death's in the house!

II.

There is a shroud; there is a pall;
Lilies whiten in the covered hall;
The mirrors are veiled, the clock is still,
Thus saiuts from the golden hill.

III.

Now there's a grave round which we stand
(With sympathies on every hand,
And memories of unwritten kisses.)
Crying,—Oh that we wrinkles her brush
Side! Side!

IV.

Ah! you may stand with weltings here
Her Awaline with full many a tear,
But I who called her to the grave
Can only see by Death's dark shrine,
Cain! Cain!

THE MESTIZA GIRL'S REVENGE.

BY HERMAN BENDIT.

The direct route from Carmen, the Capital of Venezuela, to the small village of Vacia Lucia passes over forty miles distant, passes through a wild gloomy defile of the mountains of Carmen. Two poor or drifts was once the stronghold of a ferocious Indian bandit, named Cimeron, who became the terror of all the country round about the Capital, and who accepted not to murder and plunder all with whom he came in contact. All alike became his victims, whether rich or poor, old or young, old or young, male or female—or, if indeed he did spare any, it was to retain them as active members of his accursed band, or as prisoners upon whom to glut his beast passions. For twenty years, in spite of every effort which the rulers of the land made for his destruction, he managed to avoid arrest and retain his sway. At last the whole body of three hundred troops were sent against him, only one-tenth of whom ever returned to tell the horrible fate of their companions.

In the most gloomy and inaccessible part of the defile mentioned, there had, anterior to the time of Cimeron, been erected a church, where the surrounding peasantry were wont to resort every Sunday traveler to offer his devotions. Of this church, when in the month of his power, Cimeron took possession, and so fortified and garrisoned it as to render it almost impregnable. Here, during the later years of his life, he established his headquarters, and was fearful with which his bloodthirsty band to the destruction of whomsoever had incurred his wrath or excited his displeasure.

On one of his marauding excursions he stopped at the last of a poor peasant; and finding within a young youth and maiden, he at once resolved to preserve their lives and carry them away prisoners. To this step not so did Cimeron act in the part; for the youth was to be forced into his service and compelled to become a robber and a murderer, and the girl to be reserved for a purpose too shocking to name.

The girl, a meek, beautiful creature, named Juanita, for a time submitted to her cruel fate, without attempting resistance, retaliation, or escape; but she had, after awhile, formed the advance of an officer of the band whom she loathed and contemned, she was subjected to the most revolting objectionable of which the human mind can conceive. Her own escape before the deed is accomplished, do—for if detected, my crime will be my death. If not detected myself, I will watch my opportunity and endeavor to escape also."

"I fear there is no escape for either of us, Juanita," sadly replied her brother; "but revenge is sweet, and death preferable to such a life as this: the saints, too, will pardon us for the deed, as it is opportunity presents, to let the heart's blood of any devil of the band."

"But Hugo first, Antonio!" replied Juanita, with compressed lips and flashing eyes:

"What is your plan, sister?"

"To find him alone, on the night it is its turn to stand guard, and bury his own dagger in his accursed heart."

"Your first hope will rest upon to-night, then," replied the brother; "for this very night he will have charge of the palisade."

"This is glorious news!" said Juanita, excitedly, at the same time pressing herself, looking forward, and seeming to utter a prayer to the saints, never, brother! and let us not be seen together. Hugo she to-night, or Juanita, may not another rise!"

"Hush! there is some one coming!"

"Adieu, then, and forget not to pray for my success!"

That night, while Cimeron and most of his band were wrapped in slumber, the small, delicate figure of a female stole through a private window into the great, dark, gloomy front ground. A few minutes later, at a tall, fierce-looking bandit was pacing slowly along his lonely round, a low, silvery voice fell upon his ear, and pronounced the name of Hugo. He turned, and the next moment stood confronted with the pretty Juanita.

"Hugo," she said, in a voice as soft and gentle as the lighting of the balmy southern breeze, "I have offended you, and I could not rest until I had displeased. You have been cruel to me; but I forgive you, and in turn ask your forgiveness."

"So, my pretty Juanita," returned the accustomed villain, "I have brought you to your senses, have I? But I forgive you, as you do me, and the future shall witness the happiness of both."

As he spoke he threw his right arm carelessly around her neck, and bent his lips to hers. It was the opportunity she sought; the handle of his sharp dirk was then brought within her grasp; and quick as lightning she seized and drew it forth, and buried it to the hilt in his heart. So sudden was the act, and so fatal the blow, that Hugo had neither time to guard nor life to shriek; but staggering a pace, he fell dead at the very spot where the fatal girl whom he had so unforgivingly wronged.

Away Sister's spirit glided the light and airy form of Juanita, and soon lost the watchful Antonio knew that she had that night passed beyond the walls of the fortified church.

"It is done, brother," she whispered, as she glided past him in the dark, and sought her own rude pallet among the slumbering bands, the vile minions of the redoubtable Cimeron.

The next day Hugo Salgado, the second in command of the bandit, was found dead, with his own dagger buried in his heart. That Hugo had committed suicide was the universal belief, and Juanita passed unsuspected of the crime. On the following night, another officer was found in the same horrible manner, his own dagger buried in his heart.

"By the Mother of God!" cried the astonished Cimeron; "there is treachery here! and the murderer must be found!"

An investigation took place, but the murderer could not be found. The excitement of the affair had just begun to die out, when a third officer was found dead in the same mysterious manner.

Fearful was the excitement caused by this last discovery. What could it mean! Had the fiend himself entered the band and holding such evidence become so many of its as to throw it away in so disgraceful a manner? or was there a murderer among themselves daring enough and secret enough to do such deeds? If he was the work of some evil spirit fond for wicked and reckless as were these men, the most superstitious enough to believe that in the presence of spirits both good and evil, and in the power of the latter to do more than human deeds. Great therefore was the excitement and consternation occasioned by these mysterious murders; and long and thorough was the investigation that sought to solve the bloody problem; but when it was found that no one could be decided to the dark transaction, great fear fell upon all, from the terrors to the most cowardly, and each grave suspicious of every other, and every sentinel lived on his lonely round in the midst of his dead companions.

Juanita, still unsuspected, remained to all appearance the same meek, quiet slave as before; but in her own heart she exulted that she was revenged, while the sanctuary watched for an opportunity to strike one blow more and then make good her escape.

The opportunity so anxiously waited for came at last. An expedition was planned against a neighboring ranchos, and most of the band were called upon to accompany the leader. Among the few that remained behind was the fourth officer, whose fate Juanita was then watching. He, too, was now resolved to take in the same manner as that of the others.

There was but one drawback to her hopes. Antonio, her brother, was also compelled to accompany Cimeron, and therefore could not escape with her. Should she, then, on the departure of the band, unload, seeking a cheerful and pleasant word wayfarer, and thus fortifying herself against suspicion? Then relating to her guilty deeds, and confession, she passed the greater portion of the night in praying for her own success and her brother's ultimate deliverance from the hands of his cruel captor.

At last, believing the proper hour had come for the execution of her plan, she quickly arose, dressed softly from among the sleeping brigands, glided through the postern gate, and silently and speedily made her way to the eastern outlet of the pass, where, as she expected, she found on duty the fourth officer.

With him as with her previous victims, she entered into conversation, and led him to believe he was the favorite object of her secret love. In this manner she passed the whole night, and when her duty; and his actually conducted her past the sentinels far down the glen; when, seizing her opportunity as she had done before, she whipped out her dagger, and plunged it into his heart.

There was nothing now for her to do except; it yet wanted an hour or two of day, and the sentinels were not probably not be missed. The morning should be well advanced; and knowing that it would surely be death for her to be seen, or even to be seen in company with her victim, when murder would not only be proved upon her, but all the others concerned in the affair, she left the deep, still pass, with the swift, light bound of the wood-land deer, and so far beyond the reach of her enemies are the morning sun should reveal which way her steps had been taken.

Thus she fled swiftly along, till the dull gray of morning began to light up the gloomy scene; when, as she was about to turn the heavy angle of a huge rock, low voices, and the dull, gloomy tread of many feet, fell upon her ear, and she paused.

She comprehended all in a moment. The band were returning from their former expedition by a different route from that by which they had departed. There was a corps of cavalry in the advance; and she had just time to secrete herself therein, when the head of the file appeared, and soon the whole column was passing.

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She comprehended all in a moment. The band were returning from their former expedition by a different route from that by which they had departed. There was a corps of cavalry in the advance; and she had just time to secrete herself therein, when the head of the file appeared, and soon the whole column was passing.

The shock was too great for her self-control and presence of mind; she had borne much, but this she could not bear and restrain her feelings; and uttering a wild, piercing shriek, she plunged forward, and fell fainting on the ground by the dead body.

As a natural consequence, her apparition caused great excitement among the band; and by the orders of Cimeron, she was at once seized and securely bound.—for that she was endeavoring to escape, her presence alone was a sufficient proof. On her return to consciousness she was sharply questioned, but nothing that she said was credited, and death's answers could avail her nothing the brave girl remained the Cimeron and Great Britain have been at loss the former, instead of being dependent Colonies were independent States, and the inhabitants thereof ceased to be British subjects and became and remain our American Citizens. Such was the result of the war, and such, at the day, you should regret, is addition to the Lesson, one or two more good days to engage.

PUPIL.—We are pleased that such a little girl as you should be so anxious to acquire of so unimportant a thing as Grammar to understand. Your letter is exceedingly well written, too, and we hope to hear from you often. Your question is a good one, and we don't know as we can quite give it satisfactorily, but we will say in explain it. Diction means, the manner of expressing our ideas, and is divided into three parts, viz., Reading, spelling, and lofty words and phrases thus in prose; the thoughts are also grouped and more feeling the sentence: in prose one would say, "The night set in, and a dark night it was." In poetry it would be, "Night's Night how dark and drear!"

And ground it with a star."

You will of course see that the latter sentence is more grand and beautiful the last or poetic way of stating the fact is than the first or prose way. Again in the prose we would say, "The sea is sailing in great splendor." The "poetic diction" would be, "The sea is sailing in its pride of power." The first of the two prose sayings is more natural than the latter, and therefore more correct. We hope this explanation, and the examples we have given, will be sufficient to answer your question, and we shall be glad to hear from you again.

DUNCAN C.—You are right on the point referred to. A periodic is one who murders his father, or any one to whom he owes reverence, or who kills a sacred person or a worshipful person of age, or who breaks or wars against his native country. Parricide is the killing of a father, mother, or any one to whom we owe reverence. Regicide is the killing of a king. Homicide is the killing of a man. Suicide is the killing of one's self. Infanticide is the killing of a child. Matricide is the killing of a mother. Fratricide is the killing of a brother. Uxoricide is the killing of a wife. Sororicide is the killing of a sister. Deicide is the killing of God. Tyrannicide is the killing of a tyrant. Patricide is the killing of one's own father. The word is accented on the second syllable, thus—ac-ce-de. Lo, Lo, Lo,